Engraved by S. Hill.

CATHARINE II.

Published by J. Nancrede N.o 49 Marlboro.h Street, Boston.

A HISTORY, OR ANECDOTES OF THE *REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA*, IN THE YEAR 1762.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
M. DE RULHIERE.

BOSTON:
Printed by MANNING & LORING,
For J. NANCREDE, No. 49, Marlbro'-ſtreet.

1798.

BRITISH MUSEUM

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

MR. Rulhiere was at Peterſburgh during the events which ſeated Catharine II. on the throne of Ruſſia; he wrote the hiſtory of them at the ſolicitation of the Counteſs d'Egmont, daughter to the Mareſchal de Richelieu, whom he had accompanied into his government, in quality of gentleman attendant. Soon after his return to Paris, his manuſcript, which he had read aloud in various companies, acquired ſome reputation. The events which had taken place in Ruſſia were ſtill the ſubject of converſation, and every one, as is uſually the caſe, related them his own way. The Court, having an intereſt in being made acquainted with a circumſtantial detail, which could be depended upon, of the intrigues which had placed Catharine on the throne of her huſband, likewiſe wiſhed to hear them read.

It

It was not long before the Empreſs got intelligence of this; ſhe gave orders to her agents at Paris to employ all means poſſible to procure the ſuppreſſion of this Work; they tempted the Author with very conſiderable pecuniary offers, which were refuſed. Failing of ſucceſs here, they tried to employ the ſtrong hand of authority. Application was made, for this purpoſe, to the Duke d'Aiguillon, at that time prime miniſter. Mr. de Sartine, lieutenant of police, ſent for Mr. Rulhiere; he informed him that he had received orders to demand his manuſcript; and thought to intimidate him into compliance by threatening him with the Baſtille. But he who had reſiſted corruption was proof againſt menaces alſo. He replied to the Lieutenant de Police, that they might ſend him to the Baſtille, nay, force his manuſcript from him, but that it would prove labour loſt, becauſe it was engraven on the table of his memory.

Theſe

Theſe threats produced nothing. Monſieur, the King's brother, having been informed of the affair, took the Author under his protection, appointed him his principal ſecretary, and not long after procured for him the place of hiſtoriographer of foreign affairs, with orders to write the hiſtory of the troubles in Poland, and permiſſion to ſearch for what materials he might ſtand in need of, in the office for foreign affairs. Nay, the Duke de Choiſeul ſent him to reſide ſome time in that country.

The agents of the Empreſs renewed their importunities: they went ſo far as to offer him thirty thouſand livres, if he would but ſuppreſs a few touches, the publication of which might be injurious to the reputation of their ſovereign; this too he refuſed, but aſſured them, on his word of honour, that the work ſhould not be printed during the life of the Empreſs.

M. de Montmorin, on the death of M. Rulhiere, in 1791, engaged his brother to

wait on M. Grim, the Empreſs's confidential envoy at Paris, with an aſſurance that he could turn that manuſcript to very good account: he fulfilled with ſtrict fidelity his brother's intentions; and, though the public papers ſeveral times announced the appearance of a Hiſtory of the Revolution in Ruſſia, the heirs have waited till the death of the Empreſs has ſet them at liberty to diſpoſe of the manuſcript depoſited in their hands.*

N. B. Care has been taken to write the Ruſſian names as they are pronounced.

* All Europe knows, that this circumſtance poiſoned the life of Catharine II. and prevented her from engaging openly in the war againſt France. The demagogues of the day knew how to take advantage of it; and perhaps the mighty republic owes its exiſtence to a woman's love intrigue. . . . .——!

This little boy, whom you ſee here, ſaid Themiſtocles to his friends, ſpeaking of his child, is the Arbiter of Greece; for he rules his mother; his mother rules me; I rule the Athenians, and the Athenians rule the Greeks.—Oh what little rulers we ſhould find at the head of great empires, ſhould we gradually trace the hand which ſets the firſt ſpring in motion! . . . . .

PREFACE;

OR

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

TO THE

Counteſs d'Egmont the Younger,

DUTCHESS OF GUELDRES, &c.

MADAM,

THIS work belongs to you: I had, it is true, employed my utmoſt exertions to unfold the moſt ſecret intrigues of the event which is the ſubject of it; but I had no intention to write the hiſtory of it: a declaration of your will ſimply determined me to undertake it; and even in the ſtyle which I have adopted, having no model before me, your taſte ſerved me as a guide.

In

In giving a relation to you and Count d'Egmont, on returning from my travels, of the revolution which took place at Peterſburgh in 1762, I was emboldened by that gaiety ſo natural and ſo becoming, which ſcarcely ever forſakes you, to introduce into the recital of a terrible event all the circumſtances, ſometimes humorous, which relate to the manners of the Ruſſian Nation; and I felt at the time, that this relation, with theſe manners, was the real point of view in which that event ought to be contemplated. The frequent queſtions which you both put to me, directed as it were, my recital, and obliged me to blend playfulneſs and pleaſantry in narrations the moſt ſerious and important. Such is, in truth, the character of this hiſtory, in which it was your wiſh that I ſhould preſerve the ſpirit, nay, the very tone, which that converſation had transfuſed into my narrative.

Perhaps, indeed, an event ſo extraordinary may require a ſingular ſpecies of narration.

ration. The importance of the different intereſts, for in the preſent caſe a great Empire is concerned, the ſingularity of the action, the horror of the cataſtrophe, the name of Catharine II. communicate, it muſt be owned, both grandeur and ſolemnity to this revolution; but the frivolity of the intrigues which put it in motion, the licentiouſneſs of Ruſſian manners, and the puerilities which brought down deſtruction on the head of the unfortunate Emperor Peter III. could not be related in a ſerious and uniformly grave ſtyle: to repreſent them by general touches, as that ſtyle muſt have required, would have been to ſtrip them of all credibility: the neceſſity of painting them in detail, and in their proper colouring, if I may uſe the expreſſion, muſt have obliged the graveſt Author in the world to deſcend to the tone of memoirs the moſt familiar; and in relating thoſe riſible anecdotes, unleſs he had ſometimes appeared to laugh the firſt, his gravity would have rendered himſelf ridiculous.

Certain

Certain criticks have it in their power to tax me with never having, in a narrative like this, employed the names of virtue and criminality; with never having given to any one principal action in the piece a ſingle epithet which could make it conſidered as either good or bad. I thought only of painting; but that manner which, in the hands of the poets, produces ſuch happy effects, is not ſufficient for the hiſtorian. He who wiſhes to tranſmit to poſterity, the memory of the good and of the evil which he has obſerved in his own times, ought not to truſt entirely to the impreſſion which a ſimple recital will make on the minds of his Readers. He muſt not conſult ſentiments of admiration, of intereſt, or of pity, in order to form a judgment of all human actions. A certain greatneſs is ſometimes found to blend with vicious actions. Genius may be carried into criminal conduct, agreeableneſs into frailties, and heroiſm into fatal imprudencies. It is

to

too true that, in ſuch ſuppoſed caſes, ſentiment would be a very unfaithful judge, and this is in general the ſource of ſo many defective judgments, which the generality of readers never fail to carry into the ſtudy of hiſtory. But in reciting a revolution ſtill quite recent, it was of eſſential importance to guard againſt inſpiring my readers with any thing like diſtruſt. A ſingle epithet more or leſs rigorous would have excited againſt me a ſuſpicion of partiality. Beſides, when I related to you, for the firſt time, this long ſeries of anecdotes, neceſſarily interwoven with each other, from the relation which they have to the ſame event, I took care to diſplay them in their true light, ſo as not to lay a bias on your opinion. But I ſtudied with ſtill greater attention, all the movements narrated with a ſentiment of enthuſiaſm, weakneſs with indulgence, crimes with horror, and vices with ſome ſtrokes of ridicule.

One of the beſt leſſons which we have received from an excellent maſter in the art of writing, is to impreſs it upon ourſelves that our productions are to be read and judged by the greateſt of mankind, even by ſuch as have immortalized themſelves by their genius; by figuring to ourſelves, when we aſſume the pen, that we are in their preſence; by aſking ourſelves, What would Plato, what would Tacitus ſay, were they to hear this work read? I declare that inſtead of repreſenting thoſe great men to myſelf, in writing this hiſtory ſolely for your uſe, it is in your preſence I imagine myſelf writing. I thus followed, in a manner leſs ſevere, the ſpirit of that leſſon. But ſeeing I have impoſed it upon myſelf as a law, through the whole of this narrative, to paint and not to judge, permit me, Madam, in this place to diſcloſe my general opinion of the manners which I have painted.

There is not upon the face of the globe a power more abſolute than that of the ſovereigns

ſovereigns of Ruſſia: through the whole extent of that Empire, their will is the only law; all morality is ſummed up in one word, obedience. We ſhall ſee, at the ſame time, in this very thing, the extreme miſery of their condition, and how their power, while it tranſgreſſes all the bounds preſcribed to human beings, deſtroys itſelf, and feels itſelf much more miſerably limited on every ſide, being obliged to obey the very inſtruments which it employs, the ſoldiery, ſuperſtition, public prejudices. It is, therefore, from downright infatuation, that moſt princes employ themſelves in forging fetters of this ſort: they forget that in ceaſing to reſpect the inclinations of a free people, they muſt ſooner or later become ſlaves to the caprices of an ignorant populace.

Certain traces of ſagacity and courage ſcattered over this hiſtory, ought not to dazzle the reader; and if any one has conceived ſome eſteem for a nation which produces ſuch men, I entreat him to obſerve

that what he admires is to be aſcribed to habits of conſpiracy, to the hope of rapidly acquiring a fortune, and that theſe convulſions are always momentaneous. The whole ſtate is actually weighed down under the preſſure of the government; terror reigns univerſally; miſtruſt fills the throne, but hope is at the gates of the palace. The firſt ſoldier who can look at the gallows without fear, ſees no bounds ſet to his ambition; and certain ſtrong ſpirits placed between the lowneſs of ſlavery and the audaciouſneſs of conſpiracy, neceſſarily become atrocious. Such were the manners which began to ſhew themſelves at Rome, under the earlier Emperors. It ſeemed to me difficult to give credit to the hiſtorian of thoſe deplorable times; but no ſooner had I arrived in Ruſſia, than every ſcene which Tacitus has painted, aſſumed, in my eyes, a new character of probability. The Ruſſians, in the progreſs of their civilization, conveyed to me a faint idea of what Rome was become

come in her decline. This mournful conformity ſtruck my eyes whichever way I turned. That ſuperſtitious and phrenetic reſpect which the Roman Emperors exacted to their images never produced any thing more memorable than the following Ruſſian anecdote, which took place but the other day. In the year 1734, when the city of Peterſburgh was almoſt entirely deſtroyed by fire, the Empreſs Anne being then on the throne, the quarter which was firſt burnt down, had a communication with a wooden palace, by a triumphal arch likewiſe of wood, and the only means of preſerving the reſt of the city, was to cut down that miſerable monument: but the Ruſſian general who commanded the party employed in extinguiſhing the flames, having obſerved an A on that arch, the firſt letter of the Empreſs's name, durſt not preſume to touch that ſacred ſymbol: he diſpatched a courier to court, which was then eight leagues off; and while they were waiting for his return, the fire forced

ed its way by means of this communication, and reduced to aſhes the palace and the city.

I admit that the ſovereigns of Ruſſia, with the aſſiſtance of the foreigners whom they invited into their country, have endeavoured, during ſeveral of the laſt reigns, to civilize their ſubjects, whereas the Neroes and the Domitians purpoſely exerted their whole power to reſtore barbariſm. But an obſervation of much importance is here to be made; thoſe ancient tyrants, become the execration of the human race, were conſiſtent in their deſtructive efforts, whereas the ſovereigns of Ruſſia, with a diſpoſition to poliſh their nation, in aggravating the power of deſpotiſm, have effected, with prodigious exertions, two things abſolutely inconſiſtent. According to the expreſſion of a ſage magiſtrate of Geneva: "Whereever the great majority of a people ſhall be reduced to have no will or opinion of their own, it will be neceſſary to keep them in profound ignorance." This being an inconteſtable truth, what judgment are we to form

form of that enterprize of the Czars, celebrated by ſo many panegyriſts? Is it not evidently ſimilar to the deſign long ago formed by Tiberius, when he inſiſted on being ſervilely obeyed by a Senate which retained information and dignity, a deſign which has been tranſmitted to us as the chimera of a tyrant?

Thus, the relation which I have the honour to preſent to you, Madam, is conſiſtent with all the notions derived from hiſtory, with all the principles of the beſt political writers; and this conformity might, in the judgment of ſome, ſpare me the trouble of adducing the moſt poſitive proofs. But I have related anecdotes of a nature ſo private, that it may ſeem to afford matter of aſtoniſhment they ſhould ever have been known; and having no right to expect, on the ſubject of facts ſo ſerious, that I ſhould be believed on my word ſimply, I feel myſelf bound to produce both my authorities, and the means which I had of procuring information. During a reſidence of fifteen

months at the court of Ruſſia, in the ſuite of the Baron de Breteuil, miniſter plenipotentiary from France, the confidence with which that nobleman honoured me, leaves me no room to doubt that I was made acquainted with the ſame things which he knew; and, by a ſingularly advantageous ſituation, which he had the addreſs to procure for himſelf, he enjoyed, after that revolution, the confidence of all parties. Before that epoch, he was favoured with the intimacy of the Empreſs's two firſt confidantes. My perſonal ſituation in that country brought me into cloſe contact with perſons who had reſided there for forty years back, and who, from their condition, had acceſs to ſources of intelligence the moſt ſecret and the moſt infallible, among others, with M. d'Agenfeld, ſecretary from the court of Vienna. He was a prudent and reſpectable old man of the ſtricteſt probity, who ſince the laſt years of Peter I. had laboured as ſecretary under eleven ſucceſſive ambaſſadors. The practice of the miniſtry at Vienna being

being to grant no other recompenſe to their ſecretaries of embaſſy, except an increaſe of ſalary, with leave to grow old in their places, that court has, if I may uſe the expreſſion, living archives in all the countries of Europe. The facts rapidly ſketched unfolding the characters of Biren, of Munick, and of Leſtock, paſſed during the embaſſy of M. de la Chetardie, all whoſe diſpatches were committed to my care, and ſeveral of thoſe anecdotes have been related to me by Field-Mareſchal Munick. May I be permitted to ſay, the benevolence expreſſed to me by that truly great man, I conſider at this hour as the moſt valuable fruit I reaped from my travels abroad? I had occaſional intercourſe with the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, with the Piedmonteſe Odart, and one ſtill more intimate with the Grand-Maſter of Artillery Villebois. In a word, of all the perſons named in this narrative, there is not a ſingle one whom I did not perſonally know; and the very day of the revolution,

I paſſed

I paſſed entirely either in the great ſquare, or in a ſociety poſſeſſed of the beſt information. The Empreſs herſelf related the ſingular moment of her being awaked in the morning, to the Count de Mercy, ambaſſador from Vienna to her court, and now to that of France; to him I am indebted for that anecdote. The arrival of the Empreſs at Peterſburgh, and her firſt arrangements, were detailed to me, a few days after the revolution, by her valet-de-chambre Michel, who followed her. Finally, the anecdote which it is the moſt aſtoniſhing to find has tranſpired, is the converſation which the Empreſs had in her cloſet with her miniſter. All that an indiſpenſable duty permits me to ſay on this ſubject is, that there is but a ſingle perſon, of high reſpectability, and whoſe authority is unqueſtionable, between that miniſter and myſelf.

I have not palliated to myſelf the dangerous delicacy of writing the hiſtory of my

my contemporaries; but if ſuch a conſideration ought to ſuggeſt to me ſome caution, reſpecting the uſe which I ſhall make of this hiſtory, in writing it, I have loſt ſight of them altogether.

I have ſaid to myſelf, with Cicero; "It is by no means ſufficient that all which you ſay is true; you muſt have courage to declare the whole truth. And, according to a very fine expreſſion of Mably; A hiſtorian ceaſes to be a private man; he ſits in judgment on nations and kings."

But while I wait for the moment of publiſhing this hiſtory, however remote it may be, the copy which I confide to your hands, Madam, is the only one which ſhall iſſue from mine.

Your virtues ſecure me from the ſlightest alarm, on the ſubject of this confidence: and, who can be better accquainted with the reſpect due to ſovereigns in their life-time than you, Madam, to whom there ſtill remains of a ſovereignty, long poſſeſſed by the houſe

houſe of Egmont, an ancient right to the ſame reſpect, and a greater attached to your name?

I am,

With the moſt profound reſpect,

MADAM,

Your very humble,

And moſt obedient ſervant,

RULHIERE.

Paris, February 10, 1768.

1 NO 61

ANECDOTES

OF THE

REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA.

A. D. 1762.

I WAS upon the ſpot, and an eye-witneſs of the Revolution, which hurled the grandſon of Peter the Great from the throne of all the Ruſſias, and placed a female ſtranger upon it. I have ſeen that princeſs, the very day ſhe fled from the palace as a fugitive, forcing her huſband to reſign into her hands at once his life and his empire. I had an intimate acquaintance with all the actors in that tremendous drama, in which, at a moment of imminent danger, every reſource of courage and genius was eminently diſplayed; and, without any perſonal intereſt in the ſcenes which I beheld, a traveller merely, to acquire knowledge of the governments eſta-

bliſhed

bliſhed in different countries, I conſidered it as ſingularly fortunate for me to be a ſpectator of one of thoſe uncommon events, which characterize a nation, and in which men completely diſplay what is in them.

The detail on which I am entering will exhibit anecdotes of a caſt not quite ſo ſerious; and I did not feel my ſelf obliged to narrate the intrigues of young females, and the convulſions of a mighty empire, in the ſame tone of ſtatelineſs and ſolemnity. A writer of tragedy clothes great events in a dignified uniformity; his pictures repreſent the human character in a ſtate of perfection beyond the life. This is by no means my deſign, and the whole of the great piece which I am going to delineate, ſhall be a faithful copy after nature.

It is neceſſary, firſt of all, to trace up to its ſource the irreconcileable enmity which mutually inflamed the Emperor and his conſort; and the execution of this, will gradually unfold that ſeries of ambitious views by

by which this princeſs was hurried on to a uſurpation the moſt violent.

The princeſs Catharine d'Anhalt-Zerbſt paſſed her earlier years in rather a middling condition. Her father, the ſovereign of a petty ſtate, and a general in the ſervice of the King of Pruſſia, reſided in a frontier town, in which, from infancy upward, ſhe was accuſtomed to the military homages of a garriſon: and if, now and then, on her ceaſing to be a child, her mother carried her to court, to attract a tranſient ſmile from ſome one of the royal family, an ordinary eye could not have diſtinguiſhed her amidſt the crowd which attend on ſuch occaſions.

But a prince, whoſe near relation ſhe was, having been, by a ſucceſſion of extraordinary revolutions, called into Ruſſia, to mount one day the throne of that vaſt empire; and the great princeſſes of Europe declining to unite their lot with that of the heir of a crown ſo precarious, ſhe was fixed upon as a proper match for him. Her own

neareſt relations made her renounce the religion in which they had brought her up, to make room for the ceremonial and creed of Ruſſia; and it was expreſsly ſtipulated in the marriage contract, that ſhould the prince die without children of this marriage, his conſort, if ſhe ſurvived, ſhould ſucceed to the imperial throne.

Nature ſeemed to have formed this Princeſs for the higheſt ſtate of human elevation. Her appearance, even then, announced all that was to be expected of her; and perhaps, before we proceed farther, it may be agreeable to the reader to contemplate a portrait of this illuſtrious woman.

Her figure is noble and agreeably impreſſive; her gait majeſtic; her perſon and deportment graceful in the higheſt degree. Her air is that of a ſovereign. Every feature proclaims a ſuperior character. Her neck is lofty, and the head finely detached. The union of theſe two parts, eſpecially in profile, poſſeſſes wonderful beauty; and this beauty, in the movements of her head, ſhe

ſhe has the art of ſetting off to wonderful advantage. Her forehead is large and open; the noſe borders on the aquiline; her mouth is ſweetly freſh, and embelliſhed by a ſingularly regular and beautiful ſet of teeth; the chin ſome what plump, and rather inclining to double, but without the ſmalleſt tendency to fatneſs. Her hair is cheſnut-coloured, and uncommonly fine; the eyebrows are dark brown; the eyes hazel and extremely faſcinating. The reflexes of light give them a bluiſh tint; and her complexion is dazzlingly clear. Loftineſs is the true character of her phyſiognomy, taken as a whole. The ſofter characters of gentleneſs and goodneſs, which are there likewiſe depicted, appear, to a penetrating obſerver, only as the effect of an ardent deſire to pleaſe; and thoſe ſeductive expreſſions diſcover but too plainly an intention to ſeduce. A painter who was deſirous of giving an allegorical repreſentation of this great perſonage, propoſed to exhibit her in the figure of a charming

charming nymph, preſenting with one hand, ſtretched forth, a wreath of flowers, and holding in the other, which is thrown behind her back, a flaming torch.

Married to the grand Duke at the age of fourteen, ſhe had a preſentiment from the beginning, that ſhe ſhould become miſtreſs of his immenſe dominions. The aſcendant which ſhe eaſily acquired over her huſband led directly to this; ſhe was indebted for it entirely to her ſkill in the art of pleaſing, and, for a long time, her ambition aimed at nothing higher. The nights, which they always paſſed in each other's company, did not appear ſufficient to exhauſt the vivacity of mutual endearment; and many hours were daily ſtolen from the formalities of a court, and devoted to an intercourſe of a different nature. The whole Ruſſian Empire was eagerly looking forward to the birth of a ſecond heir, not imagining it poſſible that a youthful couple ſhould be all the while employed only in practiſing the Pruſſian exerciſe, and doing the duty of a common

common ſentinel under a ſhouldered muſket. The grand Dutcheſs, when ſhe ſpoke of thoſe ſecret amuſements many days afterward, uſed to ſubjoin: "I thought myſelf good for ſomething elſe." But at that time, by obſerving a profound ſilence reſpecting her huſband's whimſical delights, and by complaiſantly humoring his taſte in taking a ſhare of them, ſhe got the complete government of him. She employed every effort to conceal the puerilities of the prince, and having no hope of reigning but through him, it was her conſtant endeavour to make it appear that he was not unworthy of filling a throne.

But exerciſes of the kind hinted at, produced no ſecurity to the Ruſſian ſtate of a lineal ſucceſſion to the imperial crown; and the Empreſs Elizabeth wiſhed to ſee an heir as the means of preſerving her own ſafety. She kept in jealous confinement the unfortunate boy, known to the world by the name of the young Ivan, who, dethroned at the age of fifteen months, was

inceſſantly hurried from one corner of the Empire to another, from fortreſs to fortreſs, in order that his partiſans, if any ſuch there were, might be kept in profound ignorance of the ſpot in which he was ſecluded. Elizabeth is the more deſerving of commendation, for having ſpared his life, as ſhe knew perfectly well, from the facility with which a Revolution is effected in Ruſſia, how the crown tottered upon her own head. She durſt not lie down to ſleep till daylight appeared, becauſe it was a nocturnal conſpiracy which had placed her on the throne. She lived under ſuch a terrible apprehenſion of being ſurpriſed during the hours of reſt, that ſhe had diligent ſearch made all over her dominions for the moſt wakeful being who could be met with; and this perſon, when he was found, fortunately happened to be very deformed; he watched in the Empreſs's bed-chamber all the time ſhe lay aſleep. Notwithſtanding all thoſe terrors, ſhe made no attempt on the life of the only being who could inſpire them.

hem. Nay, the parents of Prince Ivan ad not been kept asunder; and it was cur-ently reported that, while they were un-er confinement, they had the consolation, r perhaps the affliction, of producing sev-ral children, formidable competitors, con-dering they were the senior branch of the ouse which gave Czars to Muscovy. The ureſt precaution against their pretensions as to shew the nation a long series of other eirs; but, how to effect this? There lay he difficulty. Eight years had already olen away: and although nature had not otally denied sensibility to the grand Duke, he intelligent were able to demonstrate, y infallible tokens, that the line of suc-ession was not to be expected from this uarter.

Encouragement was given to a young ourtier, one of the Counts Soltikof, who ad the advantage of a fine figure, but hose mental powers could excite no great pprehension, to aspire after being the avourite of the grand Dutchess. The

High

High Chancellor of Ruſſia was employed to break the matter to herſelf. She took it as a high inſult: ſhe threatened him: ſhe reminded him of the article in her marriage-contract, by which, in default of children, ſhe was ſecured in the ſucceſſion to the throne. But when he had given her to underſtand, that the commiſſion which he then executed was given him by the very perſons to whom ſhe meant to complain; when he had made her ſenſible of the dangers to which ſhe expoſed the Empire, if this precaution was not taken, and the reſolutions, more or leſs fatal, which the deſign of preventing thoſe dangers might dictate againſt herſelf, ſhe replied, "I comprehend you; introduce him to me this evening."

As ſoon as her pregnancy was declared, the Empreſs Elizabeth diſmiſſed the young Ruſſian upon foreign ſervice. The grand Dutcheſs ſhed tears on the occaſion, and endeavoured to find conſolation in the choice of new objects. But the ſucceſſion

was

was now secured, and the choice of new favourites gave offence. Her conduct was watched with a severity which suited neither the general manners of the court, nor the personal conduct of Elizabeth. Indeed, though it is only of late that the Russian ladies have been admitted into society; though at the close of the last century they lived in a state of confinement, and had no manner of weight even in the scale of domestic government, nevertheless the practice of absolute seclusion, and the employment of eunuchs not being established in the country, there resulted from this imprisonment of the women, amidst herds of slaves, a total dissoluteness of manners: and when Peter I. raised his subjects into a state of society, he had to reform only an apparent austerity in morals, in a real state of gross depravity. The late Empresses were not considered as having tarnished the glory of their reign, for having selected a succession of lovers from every description of subjects, slaves themselves not excepted. Under the present

preſent reign, a young favourite governed the empire, while a ſimple Coſſaque, whoſe fortune commenced with playing on the ſerpent in the chapel of the palace, had, by a ſecret marriage, been admitted to ſhare the Empreſs's bed. Such a marriage excited no ſurpriſe in a country whoſe ſovereigns had for years paſt formed alliances indifferently with families of the loweſt rank of their ſubjects: but this Princeſs had a private reaſon for not declaring her's. Elizabeth had made it a point of conſcience to leave her crown to her nephew, the lineal deſcendant of an elder ſiſter; and from this idea of juſtice from which ſhe never ſwerved, amidſt a thouſand frailties, proceeded the ſtrange ſingularity of living without any affectation of myſtery with her lovers, and of having a huſband in ſecret. Fortunes not quite ſo brilliant were likewiſe frequently ſeen falling into the lap of perſons, who poſſeſſed no other merit than that of having given a moment's pleaſure to their ſovereign. But, whether it was concealed

envy,

nvy, or a ſcruple of conſcience for hav-
ng forced the grand Dutcheſs to take the
rſt ſtep, every future choice which ſhe
eemed deſirous to make was violently op-
oſed; the very obſcurity of the objects,
or to this likewiſe ſhe had recourſe, could
ot ſcreen them from the tremendous ex-
le of that country. She was reduced to
he brink of deſpair, when fortune ſent into
Ruſſia Sir Charles Williams, as ambaſſador
rom the court of Great-Britain; a man of
daring imagination, and whoſe converſa-
ion was plauſibly ſeductive. This gentle-
nan had the courage to argue with her
hus: he ſaid, "That meekneſs was the
nerit of victims; that dark intrigues, that
idden reſentments were far below both
er rank and her genius; that, the great-
ſt part of mankind being feeble, decided
haracters always gain the aſcendant over
he timid; that by ſhaking off conſtraint, by
eſolutely avowing who they were on
whom ſhe thought proper to beſtow her fa-
ours, by letting it appear that ſhe would

conſider

conſider as an inſult to herſelf whatever was attempted againſt them, ſhe might live in what manner ſhe pleaſed." This converſation iſſued in his preſenting to her a young Poliſh gentleman of his retinue.

Count Poniatouſki had formed a particular intimacy with that ambaſſador while he was in Poland; an intimacy indeed ſo very cloſe, that the one being uncommonly handſome, and the other equally depraved, the tongue of ſcandal was ſet agoing. The minuteneſs of this detail is perhaps foreign to my ſubject; but Monſieur de Poniatouſki having afterwards become a king, there is a degree of pleaſure in tracing the ſteps which lead to the throne. Allied by his mother to the moſt powerful family in Poland, he had accompanied Sir Charles Williams to Peterſburgh, in the view of viſiting a court ſo intereſting to that of Warſaw; and being already known by the charms of his wit, he was now endeavouring to acquire the knowledge of buſineſs, by acting in the capacity of ſecretary to the embaſſy. On

this

this young ſtranger it was, after a ſecret interview, which the grand Dutcheſs enjoyed in diſguiſe, that the whole ſunſhine of her favour was diſplayed. Poniatouſki, after a ſhort excurſion to his own country, returned to Peterſburgh in the character of miniſter, which facilitated his intercourſe with his miſtreſs. This decorum, in reſpect of condition, ſuperſeded the neceſſity of employing any other appearance of decency; and this inviolable character beſtowed, on the bold part which he was going to play, the ſacred protection of the law of nations.

Utterly contemptible as the grand Duke was, he did not degrade himſelf ſo far as to ſubmit longer to the government of his wife; but he loſt every thing from his being no longer governed. Abandoned to his own management, and thus, as it were, expoſed to the light, he appeared to every eye in his true colours. Never had fortune placed any one Prince in a more favourable ſituation. Sovereign of Holſtein from his

earlieſt years, he came, in proceſs of time, to have beſides the choice of two other crowns. It is well known that the Dukes of Holſtein, long oppreſſed by Denmark, the throne of which was filled by the elder branch of their houſe, have by turns intereſted in their quarrels the powers which have ariſen in the north; and, by a policy always ſteady and uniform, intermarrying, according to the circumſtances of the times, with the Princeſſes of Sweden or of Ruſſia, have at laſt actually got poſſeſſion of both theſe thrones. They were both offered to Prince Peter, who, uniting in his own perſon the blood of Charles XII. and of Peter I. ſaw himſelf at the ſame time elected heir of the crown of Sweden, by the ſtates of that kingdom, and invited into Ruſſia by the Czarina, as her declared ſucceſſor. On making choice of the empire for himſelf, he transferred the Swediſh monarchy to his uncle; ſo that his family is indebted to him for the luſtre which it enjoys, in poſſeſſing at this day, without a rival, all the northern

thrones

thrones: but, by a cruel ſtroke of deſtiny, after having appeared to employ unremitting exertions, for more than two centuries, in preparing for this Prince a ſtation ſo exalted, nature produced a being utterly unworthy of it.

It is neceſſary, in order to form an idea of his ſtrange character, to be informed that the care of his childhood had been committed to two men of very uncommon merit, but who fell into a great miſtake in attempting to form their pupil after the grandeſt models, attending rather to his fortune than to his capacity. On his being called into Ruſſia, thoſe two men, of manners too auſtere for the diſſoluteneſs of that court, excited fear of the ſuperior ſtyle of education which they continued to give him. He was taken out of their hands, and turned over to the inſtructions of abominable corrupters; but the firſt principles which he had imbibed having made a deep impreſſion on his mind, the combined effect was an unaccountable mixture of good intentions

tions degenerated into ridiculous manners, and of childiſh views directed toward great objects. Brought up in an utter abhorrence of ſlavery, in a love of equality, and a paſſion for heroiſm, he attached himſelf powerfully to cheriſh thoſe noble ideas; but he purſued grand projects with a narrow ſpirit; and while he propoſed the heroes from whom he ſprung as his models, his genius reſtricted him to puerilities. He affected to take delight in the meaneſt functions of the ſoldiery, becauſe Peter I. had thought proper to paſs through all the ſtages of the militia; and, in purſuance of this idea, ſo abſurd in a Sovereign, of marking the progreſs of his ſkill, by the ſteps of his advancement, he made it his boaſt, in the concerts given by his court, that he had formerly ſerved the muſicians, and had raiſed himſelf to the rank of firſt violin, by dint of talents. A ſort of military mania gave a hue to his whole life: his favourite paſſion was to act the part of a drill ſerjeant; and, that he might have this pleaſure continually

tinually within his reach, without provoking the Ruſſian regiments to murmur, he had entirely the diſpoſal of ſome miſerable ſoldiers of Holſtein, whoſe ſovereign he was. His figure, naturally awkward to ridiculouſneſs, became much more ſo by a dreſs, in which the Pruſſian manner was carried to the height of extravagance. His ſpatterdaſhes, which he wore continually, were ſo tight, that they cramped the motion of his knees, and obliged him to ſit and to walk all in a piece. A hat, of prodigious ſize, fantaſtically cocked, covered a ſmall, ugly, and crabbed countenance, the features of which, however, were not altogether deſtitute of vivacity; and he was at pains ſtill farther, to diſfigure it by perpetual grimaces, which he practiſed by way of amuſement. His mind, at the ſame time, poſſeſſed a certain degree of livelineſs, and it was eaſy to remark in him a decided turn to buffoonery. A princely deed of its kind made his character completely known. He had uſed a gentleman of his court extremely

ill, without any juſt cauſe of offence; and as ſoon as he diſcovered that he had been in the wrong, propoſed, by way of reparation, to fight a duel with him. Whatever might be the intention of the courtier, a man of profound cunning and addreſs, away they went; and plunged into the ſolitude of a wood, where, drawing their ſwords at ten paces diſtance from each other, they thruſt away luſtily without coming nearer; the Prince ſuddenly ſtood ſtill, and thus addreſſed his antagoniſt: "It would be a pity that two brave fellows like us, ſhould cut each other's throats; come, let us embrace." They were proceeding back toward the caſtle, paſſing the time in mutual compliments, when, as a good deal of company appeared, the courtier exclaimed with precipitation: "Ah! my Lord, you are wounded in the hand, take care that no one ſee the blood," and inſiſted on wrapping up the hand in his handkerchief. The grandDuke, imagining that the man thought him really hurt, did not undeceive him, gave himſelf

himſelf airs publickly on his fortitude in bearing the pain of a wound; and, to approve his generoſity, made this gentleman a firſt-rate favourite.

It is eaſy to ſee with what facility flatterers could inſinuate themſelves into the good graces of ſuch a Prince. It was not long before he found, among the maids of honour, a miſtreſs truly worthy of him. But, what will occaſion ſome ſurpriſe, his prime favourite, and aid-de-camp, Goudowitz by name, for whom his friendſhip never varied, was an honeſt young fellow, and one who really loved him.

The young court began, then, to be openly divided into two parties, when one night, at a country reſidence, Poniatouſki, as he was on the point of being admitted into the apartment of the grand Dutcheſs, without a pretence for being found in that place, fell into the hands of the injured huſband. The lover, protected as a miniſter from a foreign court, maintained, in his preſent dangerous ſituation, the rights

of

of his public character; and the Prince, who ſaw in this adventure, two courts in danger of quarrelling, durſt take no ſtep of himſelf, but had Poniatouſki ſecured in a guard-houſe, and diſpatched a courier to the favourite who governed the empire. The grand Dutcheſs, braving all danger, went in ſearch of her huſband, boldly acknowledged the whole truth, and repreſented to him how far the publiſhing of the affair might be attended with troubleſome, or even fatal conſequences to himſelf. She juſtified her own conduct, on the principle of retaliation, his keeping a miſtreſs being a fact notorious to the whole empire. She promiſed that henceforward ſhe would treat that young woman with all poſſible reſpect, which pride had hitherto forbidden her to do; and, as the grand Duke's military eſtabliſhment ſwallowed up all his revenues, and thus deprived him of the means of rendering the ſituation of his miſtreſs more agreeable, ſhe addreſſed a promiſe to the girl herſelf, of an annual pen-

ſion

on from her own pocket. The grand uke, confounded at the aſcendant over m which ſhe ſtill poſſeſſed, and at the me time importuned by his miſtreſs, con- ved at the eſcape of Poniatouſki, and did s utmoſt to prevent the rupture on which had at firſt reſolved.

The grand Dutcheſs, having derived from event which might have proved her in, a ſtill greater degree of ſecurity, and e opportunity of keeping as it were in her y, even the miſtreſs of her huſband, ſhe was nboldened to form new deſigns, and began expoſe all the weakneſs of that Prince, ith as much diligence as ſhe had formerly ed to conceal it. She had entirely changed r ſyſtem; and henceforth centering all her nbition on her ſon, ſhe formed the proj- t of transferring her crown to that child, d of ſecuring to herſelf the regency; a gacious plan, and in ſtrict conformity to e laws of that empire. But it was ab- utely neceſſary that Elizabeth herſelf uld depoſe her nephew; and how was a mild,

mild, irresolute, and superstitious Princess to resolve upon this, who, one day in signing a treaty of alliance with a foreign court left her signature unfinished, because a wafer alighted on her pen, and who respected in her nephew those rights which she herself had established? There remained one resource more at her death, the forging of a will, an expedient which, among Sovereigns themselves, is not unexampled, and by which Adrian succeeded to Trajan.

But while preparations were making to bring this intrigue to bear, a revolution in the general affairs of Europe deprived the grand Dutchess of the confidant so necessary for the accomplishment of her design, the High Chancellor Bestuchef, who, by the change of the court alliances, was thrown out of the ministry. His exile involved the departure of Count Poniatouski, whose recal was demanded of the King, his master; and the grand Dutchess plunged into the deepest affliction, having ineffectually cast herself at the feet of the Empress

mpreſs, bathed in tears, to demand the ſtoration of her lover, nay, regarded by lizabeth with a reſtleſs jealouſy, began to ve in the midſt of a court, as though ſhe ad been in a deſert.

In this manner did her life paſs for ſev-ral years, having no connexions that were nown but with ſome young women, who ad, like herſelf, been attached to Poliſh entlemen, and who, on account of their erſonal charms, were not well received at he old court; ſhe roſe with the ſun, ſpent hole days in peruſing the beſt French au-hors, frequently alone, never long either t table or at her toilette; but it was at his time ſhe laid the foundation of her fu-ure greatneſs. She has been heard to onfeſs, that all the knowledge ſhe had ac-uired of the arts of intrigue was from one f her ladies, whoſe appearance indicated he greateſt degree of ſimplicity and in-olence. It was during this period that he ſecured to herſelf friends for the hour f need; and that all perſons of conſe-

quence

quence perſuaded themſelves, from the ſecret alliances which ſhe was forming with them, that they would become of ſtill greater importance were ſhe to govern; and that, in a word, the veil of a violent and unfortunate paſſion being drawn over certain adventures of a more conſolatory nature, ſeveral of them had reaſon to think that, at her court, they might attain the place of favourite. Such was her ſituation when the Empreſs Elizabeth died the 5th of January, 1762.

Before ſhe had recourſe to the great deſigns which ſhe was meditating, ſhe once more attempted, at this inſtant, to recover her former influence by gentler methods. The miniſters, the confeſſor, the lover, and the very domeſtics were all engaged to inſpire the dying Empreſs with the thought of effecting a reconciliation between the grand Duke and his wife. This project ſucceeded, and the grand Duke, in the confuſion of the moment, appeared to reſtore to her all his former confidence. She had perſuaded

ſuaded him not to permit himſelf to be proclaimed by the regiments of guards: alleging, "That this cuſtom ſavoured too much of the ancient barbariſm; that it was more worthy of the modern ſtate of Ruſſia that the Sovereign ſhould have himſelf recognized in the ſenate," aſſured, that under a government in which forms were obſerved, it would be an eaſy matter to make every thing ſubſervient to her will. The miniſters were gained, the ſenators prepoſſeſſed. She had compoſed the oration which he was to pronounce. But no ſooner had Elizabeth expired, than the Emperor, overwhelmed with joy, preſented himſelf with eagerneſs to his guards, and, by their proclamation, aſſuming deſpotically an abſolute government, burſt aſunder all thoſe fetters which they were preparing for him, eſcaped forever from the authority of his wife, gave himſelf up daily to new reſentments againſt her, almoſt diſowned his ſon, by refuſing to recognize him as his ſucceſſor, and left Catharine no

other reſource but what ſhe derived from her intrepidity and her friends.

Peter III. began his reign by an edict, whereby, in the plenitude of his arbitrary power, he granted to the Ruſſian nobility the rights of a free nation; and as if, in reality, the rights of the people depended upon this conceſſion, the edict produced ſuch violent tranſports of joy, that this vain nation propoſed to erect for him a ſtatue of maſſy gold. But this liberty, of which, for the firſt time, they heard the name, and the claims of which ſuch a Prince was little calculated to eſtabliſh, was merely the illuſion of a moment. The will of the Sovereign, without any form, continued to be the ſole law; and the nation, ſtruck with the confuſed idea of a bleſſing which it did not underſtand, was afflicted to find that it had been deceived.

The artiſt, who was to prepare the die for the new coinage, came to preſent the deſign to the Emperor. He had endeavoured, while the general caſt of his features

tures was preſerved, to give them ſomething of dignity. A branch of laurel lightly ornamented the long curls of his flowing hair. He rejected this deſign, exclaiming, "I ſhould reſemble the King of France." He inſiſted on being repreſented in his natural deformity, his hair dreſſed in the military ſtyle, in a manner ſo very unſuitable to the majeſty of a throne, that theſe coins became an object of deriſion, and, in circulating over the whole empire, gave the firſt blow to the attachment of the people.

At the ſame time he recalled from Siberia that crowd of unfortunate beings, with whom, for ſo many years paſt, they had been attempting to people thoſe deſert regions; and his court preſented a ſpectacle which ages perhaps will never recal.

Here once more appeared Biren, formerly a domeſtic of the Dutcheſs of Courland, brought into Ruſſia by that Princeſs, when ſhe came to mount the throne, and raiſed, in quality of lover to the Sovereign, to exerciſe ſupreme authority; but though

raiſed

raiſed by means ſo gentle, he governed with a rod of iron; he cauſed to be put to death, in the courſe of nine years, no leſs than eleven thouſand perſons.

Under his tremendous government, this empire ſhone with its greateſt ſplendor, becauſe every department of the adminiſtration, all places of power, all employments were at that time filled by the illuſtrious foreigners whom Peter I. had formerly collected in his travels; their long ſervices had placed them at the head of every department, and Biren, a foreigner like themſelves, checked their ambition under a ſevere yoke, and made the whole Ruſſian nation to bend under their authority. Become, by force, ſovereign of Courland, the nobility of which had refuſed, ſome years before, to admit him into their order, he aimed likewiſe at the regency of the Ruſſian empire, with an unlimited power. His expiring miſtreſs, who had choſen for her ſucceſſor an infant of a few weeks old, ſaid to him with tears; "Biren,

you

you are ruining yourſelf:" nevertheleſs ſhe had the weakneſs to appoint him. Every thing was provided for the arrival of this moment. He had, a ſhort time before, put to death, by torture, all thoſe of the exiles, who could have been objects of terror to him, in order that, upon his acceſſion to the regency, he might ſhew himſelf indulgent without danger. He had ſacrificed one victim to public deteſtation, in a confidant whom he cauſed to be tortured to death with a gag in his mouth, laying to his charge every thing odious in the courſe of this reign. He was going to ſecure the empire to himſelf; but the firſt attempt made againſt him, proved his deſtruction. Three weeks of ſovereign authority coſt him twenty years of exile. He returned from it in the beginning of old age; but time had diminiſhed neither his beauty nor ſtrength, though his countenance was harſh and ſevere. During the nights of ſummer, he walked almoſt alone in the ſtreets of that city where he once had reigned, and in

which every perſon he met had to demand of him the blood of a brother, or of a friend. He ſtill meditated to return into his own country as a Sovereign; and when Peter III. was dethroned, Biren ſaid, "That the real fault of this Prince had been indulgence, and that the Ruſſians were to be governed only by the rod, and the axe."

There returned alſo on this occaſion the man who had overthrown Biren, Field-Marſhal Munick, a gentleman attendant on the Count d'Oldembourg, formerly a lieutenant of infantry in the armies of Eugene and Marlborough, and honoured with the approbation of both of thoſe Generals; who became an able engineer, as ſoon as chance had thrown into his hands, during the idleneſs of a winter-quarters, ſome torn and detached leaves of an indifferent Treatiſe on Geometry in French; and who ſoon rendered himſelf ſuperior even to thoſe numerous men of genius among whom he had been allured by Peter the Great into his dominions; celebrated in Ruſſia

Ruſſia for having conſtructed the canal which joins Peterſburgh to ancient Muſcovy; but better known through the reſt of Europe by his victories over the Poles, the Tartars, and the Turks.

After he had taken the city of Dantzick, from which King Staniſlaus, whom he was beſieging, had ſucceeded in effecting his eſcape, Biren, who was at the head of affairs, had him brought before the arbitrary tribunal called *Inquiſition d'Etat*, as having favoured that eſcape. Munick, on being acquitted, kept up his reſentment, and eight years afterward, the parents of Ivan having propoſed to him to enter into an intrigue of court againſt the regent Biren, he, for anſwer, put himſelf at the head of their guard, went up to the palace, and clapped the regent in irons. He beſtowed that title on the Emperor's mother; and, in the name of this Princeſs, governed the empire for a ſhort time. But, being an object of hatred to that haughty woman, he retired with high reputation to enjoy the

the *otium cum dignitate*. His retreat did not prevent, on the acceſſion of Elizabeth, his being arreſted, and condemned, with all the old miniſtry. He aſcended the ſcaffold, upon which he was going to be quartered, with the moſt perfect compoſure, and there received his pardon with the ſame apparent indifference. Carried into Siberia, ſharply looked after, in a lonely houſe, in the midſt of a moraſs, his threats, and frequently his name alone, cauſed all the governors of the neighbouring countries ſtill to tremble, and the art, to which he had been indebted for his firſt elevation, became the amuſement of his lengthened ſolitude. He returned from exile at the age of eighty-two, the handſomeſt of old men, ignorant whether or not he had one ſon remaining; but thirty-three of his deſcendants aſſembled for the purpoſe of receiving him on his arrival, and at this meeting, the man whom ſuch various changes of fortune had not been able to move, was aſtoniſhed at finding himſelf ſhedding tears.

Since

Since the moment in which Munick had cauſed Biren to be put in chains, diſputing with him the poſſeſſion of ſupreme authority, the firſt time theſe two men ſaw each other was in the gay and tumultuous crowd which ſurrounded Peter III. and that Emperor, having called them to him, tried to prevail on them to drink together. He ordered three glaſſes to be brought; but while he was taking his own, ſome one approached, and ſpoke in a whiſper; he drank while he was liſtening, and in conſequence of what was ſaid to him retired haſtily. Theſe two ancient enemies remained fronting one another, each with his glaſs in his hand, without ſpeaking a word, their eyes fixed on the place from which the Emperor had diſappeared, and preſently flattering themſelves that he had forgotten them, they darted a look at each other, meaſured each other with their eyes, and putting away their glaſſes without taſting the wine, walked off different ways.

Near them appeared Count Leſtock, who

who had deſtroyed the Princeſs regent, and crowned Elizabeth. This man, born in the Electorate of Hanover, having learnt ſurgery at Paris, where he acted ſo as to get a place in the Baſtille, came into Ruſſia to ſeek his fortune, and was ſoon, for his miſconduct, ſent into Siberia. On being recalled from this firſt exile, and having been appointed ſurgeon to the Princeſs Elizabeth, he perſuaded her that ſhe had a title to the throne, laboured during a whole year to form a party for her, by his ſole exertions ſucceeded in intereſting both Sweden and France in her behalf; and finding himſelf diſcovered, while Elizabeth, who in a danger ſo threatening, imagined ſhe had no other reſource than that of abandoning all her projects, he drew upon a card, that Princeſs with her head ſhaved, and himſelf upon a wheel; and on the back of the card, the Princeſs on a throne, and himſelf on the ſteps, decorated with the ribbon of a ſuperior order of knighthood; and, ſhewing her theſe two reverſes, he ſaid to her,

" This

"This night the one, or to-morrow the other."

He conducted her that very night to the palace, escorted by a hundred old soldiers who had served under Peter the Great, whose daughter she was. Upon their arrival at the first guard house, a drum began to beat the alarm, but either Lestock or the Princess run a knife through the drumhead; and they ever after disputed the honour of having had that presence of mind. The sentinel who guarded the chamber of the infant Emperor, stopped Elizabeth, and presented his bayonet to her breast. Lestock exclaimed, "Wretch, what are you about? Fall down and entreat mercy from thy Empress." The sentinel immediately prostrated himself. After having thus placed upon the throne the mistress whom he served, governed continually by his genius for intrigue, stimulated by an incessant itch of negociating with foreign powers, he was easily ruined by the ministers. When on his return, the conspiracy of the Empress Catharine

Catharine had broke out, nothing could equal the vexation of this man at finding there had been a plot in his time, in which he had no hand; and he obſerved, with a malignant joy, the imprudencies of thoſe young conſpirators.

Thus each day witneſſed the arrival of perſons rendered intereſting at leaſt by their long calamities; and the court of Peter III. was filled with a multitude, who were indebted to him for more than life. But it filled, at the ſame time, with ancient animoſities, and irreconcileable intereſts. All theſe exiles, ſtripped of every thing at the time of their diſgrace, demanded the reſtitutions of their fortunes. They were conducted into vaſt magazines, where, in compliance with the cuſtom of the country, all confiſcated property is preſerved; melancholy depoſits of the loſs of favour, in which were arranged, according to the order of time, all the remains of thoſe renowned ſhipwrecks. They there ſought, in the midſt of duſt, for their valuable effects,

fects, their diamond inſignia, the gifts with which Kings themſelves had formerly purchaſed their influence; and too often, after fruitleſs reſearches, they recognized them in the poſſeſſion of the favourites of the late reign.

Peter III. was haſtening to his ruin by actions good in themſelves, and moſt of the things which contributed to his downfal became faults merely by his precipitation, and have ſince been executed by his wife with ſucceſs and reputation. It was a matter of much utility to his empire, that the clergy ſhould be diſpoſſeſſed of their immenſe riches; and after his fall, Catharine, by gaining over ſome of the principal eccleſiaſtics, by giving them, in private penſions, more than they loſt by the general ſeizure, eaſily executed that hazardous operation. But Peter III. who enjoined it by a ſimple act of deſpotiſm, without uſing any precautions, ſhocked the feelings of thoſe ſuperſtitious tribes; and the prieſts, moſt of whoſe wealth conſiſted in peaſant

ſlaves, excited them to revolt, and promiſed to the ſeditious prayers and abſolution.

That Princeſs founded the credit which ſhe enjoys in Europe, and the authority which ſhe exerciſes in the ſtates adjoining to her empire, on her intercourſe with the King of Pruſſia; and that intercourſe, the work of her huſband, excited againſt him a juſt indignation. In fact, while Ruſſia, leagued with the greateſt powers of Europe, was carrying on againſt the King of Pruſſia an obſtinate and ſanguinary war, Peter, filled with an extravagant paſſion for heroiſm, had ſecretly aſſumed the title of Colonel in his ſervice, and betrayed all the counſels of the allies to him.

He had no ſooner become Emperor, than he ſpoke of him, in a tone of exultation, under the appellation of "the King, my maſter;" and this hero, who was then reduced to the laſt extremity, without its appearing poſſible that the aſtoniſhing reſources of his genius could prevent his deſtruction, ſaw all at once, by this proſperous

turn

turn of affairs, his fortunes re-eſtabliſhed, the Ruſſians, his conquerors, crowding into his ſervice, and he gave in exchange to the Czar the title of General. But the Ruſſians, though they obeyed, felt with indignation that they muſt ſtill ſhed their blood in order to make reparation for their conqueſts; and accuſtomed as they had been for ſo many years to deteſt the name of Pruſſian, they could no longer conſider their maſter in any other light than as the ally of their enemy.

Peter, continuing inceſſantly to inflame the ſame diſcontents, ſent to the ſenate thoſe new laws, the collection containing which is denominated the Frederician Code, and which the King of Pruſſia had framed for his own dominions. Orders were iſſued that they ſhould be obſerved through the whole extent of the Ruſſian empire. But either from the ignorance of the tranſlators, or the want of terms in the Ruſſian language to convey an exact idea of all the expreſſions employed in law tracts, there

was

was not found a ſingle ſenator who could underſtand that work; and the Ruſſians ſaw, in this vain attempt, nothing but a marked contempt for all their own cuſtoms, and a ridiculous attachment to foreign manners. Not that ſuch an attachment was unneceſſary among a people entirely deſtitute of laws, with whom it is an admitted practice in criminal proceſſes, to beat the accuſed perſon till he confeſs his crime; and if he perſiſt in denying it, to beat the accuſer till he retract his teſtimony.

It was undoubtedly the duty of a Sovereign to reſcue his people from ſuch a ſtate of barbariſm; and as the deſigns ſo fooliſhly undertaken by this Prince have ſince been ſo wiſely executed by his wife, it is natural to conclude, that they had been concerted between them, during the time of their intimacy. But, let us leave to politicians the taſk of comparing two adminiſtrations ſo very oppoſite, though founded upon the ſame principles, to remark how that Princeſs, in completely aboliſhing the Ruſſian

Ruſſian cuſtoms, takes perpetual care to keep out of ſight the circumſtance of her being a foreigner: and, in a word, to examine whether thoſe very plans which occaſioned the ruin of the Emperor, did not facilitate to his ſucceſſor the execution of the projects in which he failed.

Diſcontent ſoon diffuſed itſelf over the regiments of guards, the real maſters of the throne. Theſe regiments, habituated for many years to the peaceful ſervice of the palace, under the command of the women who had ſucceſſively reigned, received orders to follow the Emperor to diſtant campaigns, and filled with regret at relinquiſhing their reſidence in the capital, they prepared for their departure with much reluctance; a movement little ſhort of ſedition, and always favourable to the perſon who wiſhes to excite revolt among the troops. The Emperor intended to lead them to Holſtein, reſolving to employ his newly acquired power in avenging the injuries which his anceſtors had received from

Denmark, and in reſtoring to his ancient country its extent, and its independence: what flattered him moſt in the proſpect of this expedition, was the felicity of having upon the road an interview with the King of Pruſſia; arrangements were made for this meeting; all the ſtates of Europe began to be alarmed at the thought of this hero's availing himſelf of his whole aſcendant over his fanatical admirer, ſo as ſpeedily to have under his command a new army of a hundred thouſand Ruſſians; and the whole European Continent, with eyes fixed on this event, ſaw itſelf threatened with a revolution.

The city meanwhile appeared to be entirely occupied in feaſting. The ſolemnities of peace were celebrated amidſt the preparations for war. A licentious joy reigned in the palace. The time approached when they muſt go, and join the army; the court, on the point of ſeparating, was fearful of interrupting their pleaſures for a ſingle day.

The

The Ruſſian nation is indolent, gay, diſſolute; and though the mildneſs of the late reign had given ſome poliſh to the mind, and ſome decency to manners, the time was not long paſſed ſince that barbarian court had celebrated, by a feſtival, the nuptials of a buffoon with a goat. The new court eaſily aſſumed, therefore, the air and tone of a company of ſoldiers making merry.

The ſix months of which this reign conſiſted, were an uninterrupted ſcene of revelry. Beautiful women over-heated themſelves with Engliſh beer, and the fumes of tobacco, without being ſuffered by the Emperor to return home, for a ſingle inſtant of the day; overcome with fatigue, and watching, they fell aſleep on ſofas, in the midſt of theſe noiſy orgies. The actreſſes, and female dancers, all of them foreigners, were frequently admitted to theſe public feſtivals; and when the ladies of the court complained of this to the Emperor, through the medium of his miſtreſs, he anſwered, "That among women there was no diſtinction

tinction of rank." Amidſt the very licentiouſneſs of theſe revels, in his moments of moſt intimate familiarity with the Ruſſians, he could not refrain from expreſſing his contempt for them by perpetual ſneers, and mockery. This court preſented an extravagant mixture of juſtice and immorality, of grandeur and ſillineſs. Two of his greateſt favourites, having ſold the protection which his favour had beſtowed on them, he beat them violently with his own hands, took for his own uſe the money which they had received, and continued to treat them with the ſame diſtinction as formerly. A ſtranger having come to give him information reſpecting certain ſeditious expreſſions which he had heard, Peter anſwered, that he deteſted informers, and ordered the man to be puniſhed. To the amuſements of the court, ſucceeded the violent exerciſes with which he teazed, and wearied out his ſoldiers. His military mania had no longer bounds; he was deſirous that a perpetual diſcharge of artillery

ſhould

ſhould give him an anticipated repreſentation of war; his peaceful capital preſented the noiſy image of a beſieged city. He gave orders, one day, that they would let him hear the report of a hundred large pieces of cannon fired off at the ſame inſtant; and it was neceſſary, in order to repreſs that whim, to aſſure him it would ſhatter the city to pieces. He would frequently riſe from table, and throw himſelf on his knees, with a glaſs in his hand, before the portrait of the King of Pruſſia. He would exclaim, "My dear brother, we two will conquer the univerſe." He had conceived a ſingular affection for the envoy of that Prince. He wiſhed the envoy, before his departure for the campaign, ſhould have all the young women of the court. He frequently would ſhut him up with them, and place himſelf, with a drawn ſword in his hand, as ſentinel at the door; when thus employed, the High Chancellor of the Empire happened to come to him on buſineſs, he ſaid to him, "Go, and

ſettle

ſettle it with Prince George; you ſee I am on duty." Prince George, of the houſe of Holſtein, was one of his uncles, who had been a lieutenant-general in Pruſſia, and to whom he had ſometimes ſaid publickly, "Uncle, you are but an indifferent General, the King has given you your diſcharge." Whatever might be in this expreſſion of contempt, he confided every thing to this Prince, from an inſtinctive feeling of affection for his family. He intended at the very moment when he was dethroned, to give him a ſovereignty, having already conſtrained Biren to relinquiſh in his favour what were called his rights to the Dutchy of Courland; and from the day of his acceſſion to the throne, liſtening injudiciouſly to an honourable feeling, he had, to the great regret of the Ruſſians, invited to his court all the Princes and Princeſſes of that numerous houſe.

Every eye was turned toward the Empreſs, but that Princeſs, apparently unconnected, and perfectly tranquil, afforded no ground

ground for ſuſpicion. During the funeral obſequies of the deceaſed Empreſs, ſhe had endeared herſelf to the people by a rigid devotion, and a ſcrupulous fidelity in obſerving all the formalities of the Greek religion, more diſtinguiſhed by a pompous ceremonial than by its morality. She made it her ſtudy to ingratiate herſelf with the ſoldiers, by the only means which the lonelineſs of her ſituation permitted her to employ. She put condeſcending queſtions to the ſentinels, and preſented them her hand to kiſs. One evening, as ſhe was croſſing a dark gallery, and one of the ſentinels having reſted his arms in honour of her as ſhe paſſed, ſhe inquired how he came to know her. The man replied, in the Ruſſian ſtyle, which borders a little on the oriental, "Mother, who could poſſibly miſtake you? Every ſpot where you are is illuminated by your preſence." She ſent the ſoldier a piece of gold, and her emiſſary eaſily made him a partiſan. Ill uſed by the Emperor, ev-

ery

ery time that ſhe was obliged to appear at court, ſhe ſeemed to be under apprehenſion of treatment the moſt violent. Sometimes, in public, involuntary tears ſtole down her cheeks, apparently in ſpite of all her efforts to reſtrain them. She endeavoured thus to excite the compaſſion of the people as an engine in her favour. Her ſecret emiſſaries propagated reports of the dangers to which ſhe was expoſed; and indeed ſhe appeared to be reduced to ſuch a ſtate of dejection, and fallen into ſuch diſcredit, that ſhe had loſt all authority, even in the interior of the palace, and her domeſtics ſeemed to ſerve her no longer, but from a principle of attachment.

If it were proper to form a judgment of her deſigns from the hazards which ſhe run, and to juſtify perhaps what ſhe dared to attempt by what ſhe had to fear, it will be aſked, What were the preciſe intentions formed by her huſband to her prejudice? But how is it poſſible to unfold theſe with any degree of certainty? Such a man could

could have no fixed reſolution, but his emotions were dangerous. Certain it is, he had entertained ſerious thoughts of releaſing the unfortunate Ivan from captivity, and of acknowledging him as heir of the throne; that in proſecution of this intention, he had him conveyed to a fortreſs in the vicinity of Peterſburgh, and had paid him a viſit in that priſon. He had recalled from abroad the Count Soltikof, the firſt favourite who had been introduced to the Empreſs, under the pretended neceſſity of ſecuring the ſucceſſion, and preſſed him publickly to declare himſelf the father of the Grand Duke, expreſſing a determined reſolution of diſowning that child. His miſtreſs began to diſcover an immoderate ambition. Reports were circulated in the palace, that ſuch ladies of the court as had juſt ground of complaint againſt their huſbands, were to be allowed the privilege of a divorce; and the Emperor had juſt given private orders for fitting up twelve beds, perfectly equal, for the celebration of

for as many approaching nuptials, not one of which could as yet be preciſely foreſeen. But by this time all converſation conſiſted of the complaints, murmurs, half ſentences, of perſons trying to diſcover the ſentiments of each other. The Empreſs was obſerved in her ſolitary walks, with an air of ſerioufneſs, but not of chagrin. A penetrating eye would have ſeen evidently depicted on her countenance deſigns of the boldeſt nature, diſguiſed under that ſettled phlegm. Among the populace, ſeditious rumours began to be diſperſed, which were artfully fomented, in order to diſpoſe their minds to open rebellion. It reſembled the hollow murmur which precedes a ſtorm; and the public in general anxiouſly looked for the moment when ſome great event ſhould change the whole face of affairs; it being rumoured on all hands, that the deſtruction of the Empreſs was inevitable, and at the ſame time univerſally apprehended that a revolution was about to take place. While every one was taking

a warm

a warm intereſt in favour of the Empreſs, what excited the moſt ſerious apprehenſions about her ſafety, was the want of a rallying point in her favour. The general eye was directed to no one preciſe leader. The weakneſs of all the grandees, and want of vigour in every known character, prevented any one in particular from being looked to with confidence. The whole of this vaſt enterpriſe was, in truth, put in motion by a perſonage till then unknown, and who had never engaged the public attention before.

Orlof, the handſomeſt man of the north, of rather mean birth, a gentleman, if you pleaſe, as far as the poſſeſſion of a few peaſant ſlaves can confer that title, his brothers ſerving as privates in the regiments of guards, had been appointed Aid de Camp to the Grand Maſter of Artillery, the moſt vain-glorious man in all Ruſſia. It is cuſtomary in this country for generals to have their aid de camps conſtantly about their perſon; they guard their anti-chambers,

bers, follow the carriages of the general on horſeback, and form the interior ſociety of his houſehold. The advantage of a fine form, which had chiefly contributed to the elevation of Orlof, ſoon proved the cauſe of his diſgrace. The Princeſs Kourakine, one of the moſt attractive beauties of the court, a fair brunette, freſh, and animated, was in public the miſtreſs of the General, but in ſecret ſhe beſtowed her favours on the Aid-de-Camp. The General was too vain to be jealous; but the force of evidence is irreſiſtible; unfortunately he chanced to ſurpriſe them together. The Aid-de-Camp was degraded from his ſituation, and the ſentence of eternal exile into the deſerts of Siberia was about to be pronounced, when an inviſible hand ſnatched him from impending ruin. To the Grand Dutcheſs he owed his preſervation. The news of this adventure had reached the retreat in which ſhe lived prior to the death of the Empreſs Elizabeth. Every particular related of ſo handſome a victim made her

her conſider him as worthy of the whole ſtrength of her protection ; and beſides, the taſte of the Princeſs Kourakine is ſo well known, that the lover of her choice may always be ſafely taken blindfold. Catharine Ivanouwena, a ſhrewd, and favourite waiting-maid, had the management of this intrigue, and employed every precaution which diſtruſt itſelf could ſuggeſt ; and Orlof, beloved by a beautiful unknown, although ſtill far from ſuſpecting the full extent of his good fortune, already conſidered himſelf as the happieſt of mankind. It might be aſked whether he was more ſo, when at length, amid the pomp of a public ceremony, he ſaw ſeated on the throne the beauty he adored. His manner of life, however, did not on this account continue leſs obſcure. Whether from inclination, or habit, or a fixed deſign, his time was chiefly ſpent among the ſoldiers ; and although, at the death of the General who had perſecuted him, ſhe went ſo far as to get him appointed Paymaſter of Artillery,

a poſt which gave him the rank of Captain, ſtill his mode of living was the ſame as before, and his money ſerved only to gain him more friends among the ſoldiery. Nevertheleſs he was aſſiduous in his attendance upon his miſtreſs; he was conſtantly under her eye, and yet never was intrigue conducted with more art and reſerve. In the midſt of a jealous court, not the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion ever alighted upon her. When Orlof, however, mounted at once to the height of royal favour, the courtiers acknowledged it to be an overſight, that they had not perceived the connexion ſooner; they recollected ſigns of a ſecret underſtanding between them; and mentioned particular occaſions which ought to have turned their ſuſpicions into certainty. But the whole reſult of thoſe remarks, when the affair was over, amounts to this, that the two lovers had for a long time enjoyed the ſatisfaction of a ſecret mutual intelligence, without having their correſpondence betrayed. Thus lived the grand

Dutcheſs,

Dutcheſs, at the very moment that the loftineſs of her ſpirit, and her almoſt romantic conſtancy were furniſhing topics of converſation to all Europe.

The Princeſs d'Aſchekof is the youngeſt of three celebrated ſiſters. One of them is the famous Counteſs Bouterline, whoſe travels have univerſally diffuſed the knowledge of her beauty, her wit, and her gallantries. The other, Elizabeth Woronſoff, is the miſtreſs whom the grand Duke had ſelected from among the frail ones of the court, otherwiſe denominated maids of honour. All the three were nieces of the new grand Chancellor, who, having attained that high ſituation by his aſſiduity, his ſervices, and the pliability of his diſpoſition, for the ſpace of thirty years together, was now enjoying it in luxury, and exceſs, and had nothing to give his nieces but his credit. The two firſt of them had been placed at court, and the youngeſt was brought up under his own inſpection. Here ſhe had an opportunity of ſeeing all

the

the foreign miniſters; but from the age of fifteen ſhe choſe to converſe only with the miniſters of republican governments. She exclaimed vehemently againſt the Ruſſian deſpotiſm, and declared her intention of going to ſettle in Holland, the civil liberty and religious tolerance of which country were her favourite topics. Her paſſion for celebrity appeared ſtill more ardent. It is ſingularly remarkable, that in a country where rouge and white are ſo univerſally uſed by the women, that not a female beggar appears in the ſtreets without rouge; that in the Ruſſian language, the word which denotes *red*, is the term moſt expreſſive of beauty; and that among the offerings which muſt be preſented by every village to the lady of the manor, it is always the etiquette to preſent, among the reſt, a pot of white paint; in a country of this deſcription, the young Woronſoff, at the age of fifteen, declared, that ſhe would never wear it in her life. One day, Prince d'Aſchekof, one of the handſomeſt noble-

men

men about the court, having addreſſed her in a ſtyle of gallantry ſomewhat particular, according to the language of the country, ſhe called the grand Chancellor, and ſaid to him, "Uncle, Prince d'Aſchekof is now doing me the honour to propoſe marriage to me." Strictly ſpeaking, what ſhe ſaid was true; and the young man, not daring to acknowledge to the firſt perſonage in the empire, that the propoſition which he had made to his niece did not amount preciſely to this, he married; but ſent her to Moſcow, two hundred leagues off.

There ſhe paſſed two years, in a ſociety which ſhe had the addreſs to form, of the moſt ſenſible perſons in that capital. Her ſiſter, meanwhile, the grand Duke's miſtreſs, was living like a ſoldier's wife, totally reſpected by her relations, who had flattered themſelves that, through her means, they would be able to manage the grand Duke, and who ſaw her, from her caprice and want of perſeverance, flying off from all their ſchemes. They called to mind the

ſpirit

ſpirit of the Princeſs, to which thoſe courtiers gave the appellation of addreſs and intrigue. They employed every art to procure her recal to that court, perſuaded that, by her talent for intrigue, they ſhould be able to acquire a univerſal aſcendant. The court was then at a reſidence in the country. This young woman could not behold without diſguſt her ſiſter's abominable low debauchery, and ſhe ſhut herſelf up for days together in the ſolitude of the grand Dutcheſs. Both of them, in thoſe long converſations, talked of deſpotiſm in the ſame terms of abhorrence. She thought ſhe had found, the ſentiments which ſhe paſſionately wiſhed to find, in a ſovereign of her country. But as ſhe acted exactly the oppoſite part of what was demanded of her, they obliged her to retire from court; which ſhe did, filled with indignation againſt her kindred, and with an enthuſiaſtic attachment to the grand Dutcheſs. She remained at Peterſburgh, living in a very plain ſtyle, keeping company with

ſtrangers

ſtrangers more than with Ruſſians, employing her ardent genius in the ſtudy of the moſt ſublime ſciences ; and having obſerved, at the firſt glance, what a miſerable progreſs her compatriots had made in theſe, declaring in her familiar converſations, that the fear of a ſcaffold ſhould never intimidate her ; when ſhe ſaw her ſiſter on the point of becoming Empreſs, ſhe regarded with horror an elevation to which her family could aſpire only by effecting the deſtruction of her friend: and if no violence mingled in her complaints, it was becauſe ſhe began, from this moment, to form fixed deſigns.

Such were, in the midſt of general neglect, the two unknown connexions which the Empreſs had kept up; and as they were even unknown to each other, ſhe brought forward the two conſpiracies at once, and kept them abſolutely ſeparate, meditating by means of the one, a revolt of the guards, and, by the other, a convocation of the grandees.

Orlof,

Orlof, in order to bring the plots to a bearing, had only to continue his preſent mode of life. His firſt accomplices were his brothers, and an intimate friend whoſe name was Bibikof. Theſe five men, aſſured of making their fortune, or of periſhing in the attempt, ſold all their little patrimony, and reſorted inceſſantly to the various houſes of entertainment which the ſoldiery frequented. The ſagacity which the Empreſs had employed, in placing the cheſt of artillery in Orlof's hands, furniſhed them with more conſiderable funds, with which they laid themſelves out to humour all the paſſions of the ſoldiers. In the general diſpoſition of the public mind, it was eaſy to give them a common movement. They ſowed the ſeeds of diſcontent and ſedition in every regiment; they inſpired them with pity for the Empreſs, and with a deſire of living under her authority: in order to make ſure of the firſt blow, they gained over two complete companies of the regiment of guards *Iſmailof*, and received

ceived from the ſoldiers an oath upon the crucifix: nay, they wiſhed, at all events, to make ſure of their colonel, being fully convinced, from his character, that he would neither think of betraying the conſpiracy, nor of placing himſelf at the head of it. This was Count Rozamouſki, a ſimple Coſſaque, who, from the meaneſt occupations, by which he had earned his livelihood, had riſen, by his brother's marriage with the late Empreſs, to ſuch a high degree of favour, that the formidable poſt of *Hetman*, or ſupreme commander of the Coſſaques, was expreſsly eſtabliſhed for him. This man, of a coloſſal beauty, diſdaining every thing that wore the face of intrigue, and even every thing that looked like buſineſs, was well received at court on account of his ſtately appearance, treated as a favourite by the Emperor, and beloved by the commonalty, becauſe in the midſt of honours, and the pomp of high life, the ſimplicity of his behaviour made it apparent that he did not forget the meanneſs of his

origin : of no manner of uſe in the formation of a plot, his preſence in a revolt might go far towards determining the multitude. Orlof, whom he had never ſeen, ventured to invite him to a ſecret interview, laid before him all the diſorders of government, and eaſily obtained a promiſe from him, that the moment the Empreſs ſhould lay her commands on him, he would attend her perſon. Rozamouſki came under no other engagement, and no other was exacted of him. Orlof communicated to his miſtreſs an account of this tranſaction in the interviews which he had with her, and which were ſtill a profound ſecret. They eſcaped the ſcandal of the barracks as well as that of the court ; and though this Princeſs was at that time enduring all the uneaſineſs of a pregnancy which ſhe had never declared, the ſame veil of myſtery concealed both their love and their conſpiracy.

On the other hand, the Empreſs had kept up with the Princeſs d'Aſchekof an uninterrupted commerce of letters, which, having

having for a long time been no more than the amuſement of two young minds, had gradually become a correſpondence of conſpiracy. That young female ſet her project a-going by procuring for her huſband an employment which required his abſence, that ſhe might not be under the neceſſity of making him her confidant, or, perhaps, to put him out of the way of the dangers to which ſhe was going to expoſe herſelf. She feigned a ſlight indiſpoſition, that ſhe might go, under pretence of drinking the waters, to live in a garden adjoining to the city; and thus, dividing the numerous viſits ſhe had to receive, ſhe prevented the ſuſpicion which might have been excited by an extraordinary flux of company to her houſe.

On the firſt word, the heads of the diſcontented clergy, and eſpecially the archbiſhop of *Novogorod*, promiſed every thing that could be wiſhed of them. She found, among the grandees, all the traces of an intelligence of ancient ſtanding between them

them and the Empreſs, and had nothing to do, in many conferences, but to unite the broken thread.

The only man, whoſe ſituation rendered him equally neceſſary to the two conſpiracies, was the Count Rozamouſki; but the Empreſs, ſecretly ſecure of him, took care to tell the Princeſs, "that it was unneceſſary to gain him over; that for ſeveral years paſt, he had promiſed to eſpouſe her cauſe, whenever ſhe expreſſed a wiſh; that ſhe knew him ſufficiently to put confidence in that promiſe, and that nothing more was neceſſary than to inform him at the inſtant ſhe ſhould have need of him." Theſe words, which ſeemed to announce both the moſt ſage reſerve, and the moſt generous confidence, and which muſt have been readily believed by that young woman, diverted her, without any effort, from the only method by which ſhe could have diſcovered the double intrigue; but an intereſt incompatible with the deſigns of the Empreſs, and of the Princeſs, oppoſed to

them

them an obſtacle which appeared inſuperable.

Catharine, turning to her advantage the injury which the Emperor had done to her ſon, in not naming him to ſucceed to the throne, wiſhed to ſecure it to herſelf. The governor of the young grand Duke, the Count Panin, whom regard to his fortune intimately connected with that of his pupil, eaſily led into the conſpiracy, was deſirous of depriving Peter III. of the crown, to have it transferred, in right of ſucceſſion, to the natural heir, and to give to the Empreſs only a regency. He oppoſed, for a long time, and with firmneſs, every other reſolution; the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, with whom he was violently in love, employed in vain all her arts of ſeduction; ſhe encouraged his paſſion, but ſhe yielded not to it, perſuaded among other reaſons, by the intimate connexion that had ſubſiſted between her mother and Panin, that ſhe was the daughter of this lover. A Piedmonteſe, named Odart, their confidant,

determined this young woman to get the better of her ſcruples; and it was thus ſhe obtained from Panin the ſacrifice of his pupil. It will be ſufficient, in order to make known the character of this Piedmonteſe, ſimply to relate his own words to a man who was in his confidence: "I was born poor; I ſee that there is nothing regarded in the world but money; I will have it; I would go, for this purpoſe, this evening, and ſet fire to the palace; when I have obtained it, I will retire into my own country, and live as honeſtly as any other man."

Panin and the Princeſs were both of the ſame way of thinking, with reſpect to the government of their country; and if the Princeſs was indebted to her natural diſpoſition for a violent horror at ſlavery, Count Panin, who had been miniſter from his own court to that of Sweden for fourteen years, had there imbibed ſome republican ideas. Both of them, therefore, united in the reſolution of reſcuing their

country

country from deſpotiſm, and the Empreſs ſeemed to encourage them to it. They digeſted the conditions upon which the grandees of the empire, on depoſing Peter III. ſhould beſtow, in a formal election, the crown upon his wife, with a limited authority. This hope engaged in the conſpiracy a great number of the nobles. The execution of this project wore every day more and more the appearance of probability; and Catharine, who had ſolely employed it as a mean of ſeduction, found that ſhe was going to be engaged to a greater extent than ſhe at firſt intended.

At the ſame time the two intrigues began to mingle. The Princeſs, ſecure of the grandees, deſcended to the ſoldiers. Orlof, ſecure of the ſoldiery, was making attempts among the great. Both, without knowing one another, met in the barracks, and beheld each other with an anxious curioſity. The Empreſs, who was by both made acquainted with this rencounter, thought it expedient to unite the two intrigues;

trigues; and ſhe even had the addreſs, in ſtrengthening the one by the other, to make herſelf miſtreſs of the whole movement. Orlof, in obedience to her inſtructions, made himſelf ſought after by the Princeſs, and this young woman, believing that the ſentiments with which ſhe herſelf was inſpired, were thoſe of every heart, ſaw, in the leader of a faction, only the zealous citizen. Never did ſhe entertain the leaſt ſuſpicion, that he had direct acceſs to the Empreſs; and from this moment Orlof, having indeed become the ſole and effective chief of the enterpriſe, had the ſingular dexterity to appear only as the agent of the Princeſs d'Aſchekof.

But as ſoon as he was initiated into the counſels of the grandees, he oppoſed all their projects. He ſwore that he would by no means ſuffer them to impoſe any conditions upon their ſovereign. He ſaid to them: "That the Empreſs giving her word that ſhe would herſelf regulate the rights of their liberty, they were bound to believe

believe her; that for what remained, they might act at their discretion, but he was master of the soldiery; that himself, and the guards, would act alone, if necessary, and were sufficient to raise her to the sovereignty."

The grandees, already accomplices in the plot, found themselves then obliged to yield to the strong hand of power, and to content themselves with the vague promises which the Empress made them of confirming their liberty.

In the mean time, the people were not neglected; and in order to inspire them with a spirit of revolt, a report was spread abroad, that it had already broke out in all the provinces; that the slaves of the priests were crowding together from all parts, refusing to obey the new edict; that the Crim-Tartars were encamped upon the frontiers, and were preparing to force the lines, as soon as the Emperor should have led all the troops out of the empire, to carry on a war absolutely foreign to Russia. Not only

only theſe reports, mingled with truth and falſehood, flew with rapidity, as it happens in every country where the government becomes odious, and where the general diſcontent nouriſhes with avidity every thing which can flatter and ſharpen it; but in Ruſſia, where public affairs were never converſed upon, where this curioſity might have been puniſhed with death, ſuch reports were of themſelves a commencement of revolt.

This ridiculous precipitation in the Emperor to forward his departure, occaſioning him to neglect going to Moſcow, according to eſtabliſhed cuſtom, to receive the crown in the chapel of the ancient Czars, it was almoſt openly publiſhed to be lawful to dethrone a ſovereign who diſdained to ſubmit to the ceremony of conſecration.

At the ſame time the Empreſs imparted to the miniſters of thoſe courts, whoſe alliance this Prince had abandoned, that ſhe held this perfidy in deteſtation, and took meaſures for obtaining, from thoſe courts, the

the money which was now becoming neceſſary to her. Theſe miniſters, and eſpecially the French Ambaſſador, the Baron de Breteuil, accuſtomed for ſeveral years paſt to direct the public mind of that nation, were occupied in the preſent criſis of general affairs, in defeating the projects in which the Czar ſuffered himſelf to be involved by the enemies of their reſpective ſovereigns. They embraced with eagerneſs the opportunity which the conſpiracy preſented to this effect; and although reſtricted by the orders of their courts which had preſcribed them to take little part in thoſe movements, they laboured with as much activity as ſucceſs in throwing the weight of their influence into the ſcale of the Empreſs. On the contrary, the miniſters, friendly to the Emperor, being ſolely occupied in accelerating his departure, devoted themſelves, for his pleaſure, to the infatuated toils of his court, and while ſo many intrigues eſcaped their obſervation, they congratulated themſelves on the ſucceſs

ceſs of their negociations, in ſeeing the troops file off in every direction, the fleet ready to ſail, the Emperor ſurrounded with the whole force of his empire, and the day of his departure already fixed.

Here was then a numerous party, and certain reſources; and at the very time in which the danger became moſt imminent, it did not even appear that there was yet formed a ſettled conſpiracy. Thoſe who are well acquainted with the Ruſſian nation, and even the ancient conſpirators themſelves, allege that it is always thus that ſuch enterpriſes muſt be conducted in that country; this people being predispoſed to conſpiracy by the form of their government, by their natural turn to ſecrecy, and even by their patience under ſuffering: nevertheleſs, on account of the implacable hatred which reigns among all families, and of the exceſſive diſtruſt which is diffuſed over every breaſt, it would be too imprudent to collect there a numerous body of conſpirators, to parcel out among themſelves

themſelves the different parts of one great deſign. Moreover, the habit of ſeeing people of the loweſt rank, exalted to the higheſt dignities, giving to each one the ſame right of pretenſion, it would be equally dangerous to ſhew them chiefs, whoſe approaching greatneſs they might have reaſon to ſuſpect; but that it is neceſſary to make ſure of each individual apart; to give every one hopes of the greateſt favour, and not unite them till the inſtant of execution.

If an aſſaſſination was thought the proper mode—it might be depended upon; and the captain of the guards, Paſſig, had thrown himſelf at the feet of the Empreſs, aſking only her conſent to ſtab the Emperor at noon day, at the head of his guard. This man, and one named Baſchekakof, a fellow of the ſame ſtamp, had already miſſed him twice near a ſmall uninhabited houſe (the firſt which Peter the Great built in the iſles on which he founded Peterſburgh, and which, on that ac-

count, the Ruſſians preſerve with veneration) a favourite retirement of Peter III. who came thither ſometimes of an evening with his miſtreſs, and where theſe two raſcals had waylaid him, without waiting for a prompter. A choſen band of conſpirators, conducted by the Count Panin, had been to reconnoitre the apartment of this Prince, his bed-chamber, his bed, and all the doors which led to them. The project on which they finally determined, was to come thither in force on one of the enſuing nights, to carry him off, if poſſible; to ſtab him, if he made any reſiſtance, to aſſemble the grandees in order to give to his depoſition the appearance of legal authority; and the Empreſs, who was not to appear to have taken any part in this revolution, avoiding the leaſt ſemblance of being concerned in this conſpiracy, was to have affected a compliance ſolely with the prayer of the people, and to receive, through the medium of a voluntary and unanimous proclamation, the rights which no title

conveyed

conveyed to her. Such was the baſis of her conduct. It was to produce this effect, that, almoſt inviſible in the conſpiracy, ſhe directed all the ſprings of it; and even after the public ſteps ſhe was forced to take, ſhe always endeavoured to bring the minds of the people back to that.

The Emperor was at a country ſeat, twelve leagues off. The Empreſs, for fear of creating ſuſpicion, if ſhe remained in town during this abſence, was herſelf at another country reſidence. It was on his return thence that the Emperor had fixed his departure for the war, and the Empreſs the execution of her purpoſes; but the frantic zeal of this very Captain Paſſig confounded every deſign. This violent conſpirator, always hurried away by the ardor of converſation, ſpoke of the plot before a ſoldier whom he had uſed harſhly, and who immediately lodged an information againſt him before the chancery of the regiment. On the 8th of July, at nine o'clock in the evening, Paſſig was arreſted,

ed, and a courier was dispatched to convey this intelligence to the Emperor.

All was lost, had it not been for a precaution the Piedmontese Odart had taken, to which he alone and the Princess d'Aschekof were privy. Every principal man had in his retinue a spy, who never lost sight of him. The Princess was informed at a quarter past nine that Passig was arrested. She sent word to Count Panin to come to her instantly; and proposed to him, without losing a moment, to commence the execution of their designs; a proposition similar to that which the staunch Romans in ancient times acceded to, under like circumstances; "That it was necessary to endeavour suddenly to cause an insurrection among the people and the military; that the accomplices should assemble; that the explosion of unexpected events lays hold on the mind, and hurries away the multitude; that the Emperor had nothing in readiness to oppose to such an effort; that the most valiant are astonished

iſhed by ſudden movements; and what could that mountebank do againſt them, with a train of debauchees? that things impoſſible in deliberation, are executed, becauſe there was courage to make the attempt. And what hope could henceforth be entertained of ſecrecy among ſo many affrighted accomplices? Would the obligation of an oath be felt, amidſt the pangs of puniſhment, and the allurements of recompenſe? What was to be apprehended? Death was inevitable, an ignominious death! Was it not much more deſirable to periſh in embracing their common country, in imploring ſuccour for liberty, to fall by the deſertion of the ſoldiers and of the people, ſhould they abandon her, and thus be rendered at once worthy of their anceſtors, and of immortality?"

The Roman Conſpirator did not follow this advice, and died by the hands of the executioner. The Ruſſian likewiſe thought "that a premature exploſion would irretrievably ruin every thing; that were they

to ſucceed in exciting a revolt at Peterſburgh, it would only be the commencement of a civil war, the Emperor having at his command a fortified city, a fleet ready to ſail, three thouſand men of his native troops of Holſtein, and all the other troops which had marched off to join the army ; that the night preſented nothing favourable, ſince in theſe climes, at that ſeaſon, it is light all night long ; that the abſent Empreſs could not poſſibly arrive before the morning ; that it was neceſſary to pay attention to conſequences; and that it would be time enough the next day to regulate future proceedings, as events ſhould turn up." In this manner reaſoned Count Panin, who always temporizes, and he went to bed.

The Princeſs d'Aſchekof heard him out, and departed. It was midnight. This woman of eighteen aſſumes the dreſs of a man, leaves her houſe without a ſingle attendant, and makes the beſt of her way to a bridge, which ſhe knew to be a common rendezvous

rendezvous of the conſpirators. Orlof was there in the midſt of his brothers. It is pleaſing to obſerve how fortune ſeconded vigilance. At the news of Paſſig's being arreſted, on the propoſition of inſtantly entering on action, they all remained immoveable; and joy ſucceeding this firſt ſurpriſe, all conſented to it with tranſport. One of theſe brothers, who in conſequence of the ſcar of a gaſh received in the face at a public game, had got the nickname of *Balafré* (ſcarred) a common ſoldier, who would have been of ſingular beauty, had his phyſiognomy been leſs ferocious, and in whom were united both agility and ſtrength, was ſent by the Princeſs, entruſted with a note, which contained theſe words: "Come, Madam, time preſſes." The others, with the Princeſs, paſſed the night in preparing for the inſurrection, with ſo much ſagacity, that the moment the Empreſs ſhould arrive, every thing might be ready, or if any obſtacle ſhould detain that Princeſs, no imprudent explo-

ſion

ſion could betray their deſigns. They even had a preſentiment that the enterpriſe might miſcarry; and in this caſe they had ſecured the flight of the Empreſs into Sweden. Orlof and his friend loaded each of them a piſtol, and exchanged it, ſwearing never to make uſe of this weapon in the moſt imminent danger, and to reſerve it, if the enterpriſe failed, for the purpoſe of putting each other to death. The Princeſs made no preparation on her own account; puniſhment the moſt dreadful had become a matter of indifference to her.

The Empreſs was eight leagues off, at the Caſtle of Peterſhoff, and under pretence of leaving to the Emperor, who was expected there that very day, the free uſe of all the apartments, as if ſhe apprehended her preſence might incommode that Prince and his court, ſhe had taken up her reſidence in a detached pavilion. This pavilion, built on the banks of a canal, has a communication with the river, and a boat faſtened under the windows of the Empreſs might,

might, on the very firſt alarm, have contributed to her eſcape.

Orlof, the *Balafré*, had been inſtructed by his brother in the moſt intricate windings of the garden and of the pavilion. This ſoldier awaked his ſovereign, and, thinking at this moment of uſurping to his family all the honour of the revolution, he had the happy boldneſs to ſuppreſs the billet of the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, and ſaid to the Empreſs, in her firſt ſurpriſe at being awaked, "Madam, there is not a moment to loſe; come:" and without waiting for an anſwer, he quitted her, redeſcended, and diſappeared.

The Empreſs filled with inexpreſſible aſtoniſhment, dreſſed herſelf, and continued in a ſtate of irreſolute ſuſpenſe, when this ſame man, traverſing on horſeback the alleys of the park with the rapidity of lightning, returned to her and exclaimed, "Yonder is your carriage;" and the Empreſs, as if hurried away involuntarily without having time to take any reſolution,

ran

ran to the gate of the park, holding by the arm of Catharine Ivanouwena. She there found a carriage which the *Balafré* had brought from a farm at a conſiderable diſtance, where, for two days paſt, through the care of the Princeſs d'Afchekof, it had been conſtantly in readineſs; either becauſe the impatience of the guards evinced clearly that they ſhould be under the neceſſity of ſpeedily burſting out, or that the Empreſs might poſſeſs an additional means of eſcape from all danger; having at the ſame time ſecured relays of freſh horſes as far as the neighbouring frontiers.

The carriage ſet off, driven by peaſants, and drawn by eight hired horſes; but all the horſes of this country being of the Tartar breed, ſtill preſerve their ſwiftneſs. Catharine retained ſuch freedom of mind, that on the road ſhe amuſed herſelf by laughing with her attendant at ſome little diſorder which was in their dreſs.

They perceived at a diſtance an open carriage, which was proceeding with extreme

treme rapidity; and as this ſame road led to where the Emperor was, they beheld it with uneaſineſs. It was Orlof, the favourite, flying to meet his miſtreſs, and who, after crying out to her, "Every thing is ready," turned about, and led the way with the ſame rapidity. They flew towards the city, Orlof alone in the firſt carriage, the Empreſs and her attendant in the ſecond, and behind was the *Balafré* with a ſoldier who had accompanied him.

As they approached the city, they met a French valet-de-chambre, named Michel, to whom the Empreſs had ſhewn ſingular kindneſs, condeſcending ſo far as to be his confidant, and charging herſelf with the education of all his baſtards. He was coming to attend the duties of the toilette, and beheld, with aſtoniſhment, the Empreſs in the midſt of ſo whimſical a retinue. She bent forward her head, and called out to him: "Follow me;" and Michel, with a beating heart, thought he was following her into Siberia.

Thus,

Thus, to reign deſpotically over the moſt extenſive empire in the world, did Catharine arrive, between ſeven and eight o'clock in the morning, having ſet out on the bare word of a common ſoldier, driven by peaſants, conducted by her lover, and accompanied by her waiting woman and her hair-dreſſer.

It was neceſſary to traverſe the whole city in order to reach the barracks, by which it is bounded on the eaſt, and which form on that ſide a real camp. They took the direct road to the two companies of the regiment of *Iſmailof*, which had already taken the oath. The ſoldiers had not yet left their rooms, becauſe an apprehenſion was entertained that all might be ruined by a premature declaration. The Empreſs alighted upon the road which runs round the barracks; and whilſt her conductors ran to announce her arrival, ſhe croſſed, leaning upon her attendant, a wide ſpace which ſeparates the barracks from the road. She was received by about thirty ſoldiers,

who

who came out in deshabillé, adjusting their dress, some in frocks, some in their shirts. This sight astonished her: she grew pale: her whole frame was visibly agitated. But during this agitation, which only rendered her more interesting, she told them, "That she came to throw herself into their arms, that the Emperor had given orders to put both her and her son to death, that the assassins had already set out to execute this order." They all swore, with one voice, to die in her defence. The officers assembled: the crowd increased. She sent for the chaplain of the regiment, with orders to bring a crucifix: the priest came, pale and trembling, and, holding a crucifix in his hand, he received, without knowing what he did, the oath of the soldiers. Then arrived Count Rozamouski, more faithful to her person than to the friendship of the Emperor. He was followed by General Volskouski, nephew to the Chancellor, who had fallen into disgrace, for having, amongst other reasons, been so entirely devoted to

that Princeſs; by Count Shouvalof, who, under the laſt reign, had uſed his unbounded power with ſingular moderation, and whom the remembrance of Elizabeth rendered ſtill dear to the ſoldiers; by Count de Bruce, firſt major of the guards; and by Count Strogonoff, whoſe lady, as well as the Counteſs de Bruce, were then with the Emperor, celebrated both of them for their beauty, and named amongſt thoſe, who were going, as it was ſaid, to be unmarried. There were ſome in this firſt crowd, who proclaimed the Empreſs regent. Orlof ran towards them, exclaiming, "That the work muſt not be done by halves, to run the riſk of puniſhment in order to have one day to begin again; and that the firſt who ſhould pronounce the word *regency*, he would ſtab with his own hand."

Major Chapelof, upon whom they had reckoned, did not arrive; and the firſt order which the Empreſs gave, was, "Go tell him that I have no occaſion for him; and let him be put under an arreſt." The ſubalter

ſubaltern officers joined their companies from all parts, and made them take arms; it is remarkable, that of the great number of private officers who had paſſed their word, one alone, named Pouſkine, had the misfortune, or the weakneſs, to draw back. The Empreſs went round this kind of camp, formed by the barracks, and walked through the ranks of each of the three regiments of foot-guards; a guard ſo formidable to its ſovereigns, which, formerly, compoſed of ſtrangers by Peter the firſt, conſtituted his ſecurity againſt the factions of the Ruſſians, but which, ſince that period, augmented in number, and entirely compoſed of Ruſſians, has already thrice diſpoſed of the regency or of the crown. As ſhe advanced from the barracks of the regiment of *Iſmailof* to thoſe of that of Simenoſki, at the head of this firſt regiment, the ſoldiers whom ſhe had excited merely by a diſplay of her dangers, cried out: "That in marching at their head, ſhe was not in ſafety," and formed of their own accord a hollow ſquare around her.

her. Throughout all the barracks only two officers of the regiment of Aſcenſion *Préobaſinſki* oppoſed their men, and were arreſted. In paſſing before the priſon of this regiment where the conſpirator Paſſig was detained, ſhe ſent orders for his enlargement. And this man, who was preparing to undergo every kind of torture without making any diſcovery, aſtoniſhed at ſuch unexpected intelligence, had the preſence of mind to miſtruſt it, and apprehending it to be a ſnare to draw from him, in his firſt ſurpriſe, an avowal of the conſpiracy, he refuſed to be liberated. The three regiments being aſſembled, and the ſoldiers having joined in a cry of *houra*, thought the enterpriſe finiſhed, and all aſked leave to kiſs the hand of the Empreſs. She repreſſed this extravagant enthuſiaſm, mildly repreſenting to them that ſhe had at that time other affairs on hand. Orlof had run towards the regiment of artillery, a numerous and very formidable body, almoſt all the ſoldiers of which wore

ſome

ſome honourable badge for having diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the bloody battles againſt the King of Pruſſia. He preſumed ſo far upon the credit which his office of treaſurer in this corps would give him over the ſoldiers, as to hope to be able to make them take arms; but they refuſed to obey him, and demanded to be informed what their General ſaid.

This was Villebois, a French refugee, grand maſter of the artillery, and of the corps of engineers, a man of approved valour, and of ſingular probity. For ſome time, beloved by Catharine; he ſtill believed himſelf ſo. It was through him, even in the hour of her diſgrace, that ſhe had procured for Orlof the office of treaſurer, ſo uſeful to her projects. But Orlof, wiſhing, no doubt, to break the connexions between this man and the Empreſs, had excluded him from the conſpiracy. He was at this moment engaged with the engineers. One of the conſpirators came and told him, "That the Empreſs, his

ſovereign, commanded his attendance at the barracks of the guards." Villebois, aſtoniſhed at this order, demanded, "What then, is the Emperor dead?" The meſſenger made no reply, except by repeating the ſame words; and Villebois, turning towards the engineers, ſaid, "Every man is mortal," and followed the aid-de-camp.

Villebois, who, till this moment, had flattered himſelf with being beloved by Catharine, when he arrived at the barracks, and ſaw her ſurrounded by ſuch a crowd, perceived, with the deepeſt chagrin, that ſo great a project had been carried through without his having even been made privy to it. He adored the Empreſs, yet wiſhing to convey to her a delicate reproach, diſguiſed under an excuſe, real or pretended, for the difficulties which he would find in ſeconding this enterpriſe, from his unfortunately not having been in the ſecret: "You ought to have foreſeen, Madam," ſaid he; ſhe haſtened to interrupt him,

and

and replied with the moſt ſevere haughtineſs: "I did not ſend for you to tell me what I ought to have foreſeen, but to aſk you what is your determination." He fell upon his knees, ſaying, "To obey you, Madam;" and he departed to order the regiment of artillery to take to their arms, and to deliver up to the Empreſs all the arſenals.

Of all thoſe whoſe attachment to the Emperor was known, Prince George of Holſtein, his uncle, was the only one in the city. An aid-de-camp came to inform him that there was an inſurrection in the barracks; he was dreſſing himſelf in great haſte, when he was arreſted with all his family. The Empreſs, already ſurrounded by ten thouſand men, mounted the ſame carriage, and well aware of the genius of her people, ſhe conducted them to the principal church of the city, where ſhe alighted to perform her devotions. From thence ſhe went to a vaſt palace, which on one ſide is waſhed by the river,

and

and on the other overlooks an immenſe ſquare. This palace was ſurrounded by ſoldiers, as far as it could be done. Cannons were planted at every opening, with lighted matches. The croſs ways and the ſquares were occupied by detached parties; and, in order to prevent the Emperor from having any knowledge of what was going on, orders were iſſued that a bridge, which leads from the ſuburbs of Peterſburgh, to that part of the country where he then reſided, ſhould be guarded by a detachment; but the orders came too late. In ſo great a city, one man only, a ſtranger, had thought of informing the Emperor; his name was Breſſan, born in the principality of Monaco, of a family originally from Ruſſia, but naturalized in France. He had availed himſelf of his name of Frenchman, in order to find, with more certainty, entertainment and protection: an intelligent and honeſt man, whom the Emperor had taken from the profeſſion of a hair-dreſſer, to raiſe him to the higheſt fortune, and who,

who, at leaſt upon this occaſion, juſtified, by his fidelity, this exceſs of favour. He had diſpatched a ſervant of ſome ability, diſguiſed as a peaſant, and mounted on a little country cart, and believing, that on ſuch an occaſion he ought to miſtruſt all thoſe who ſurrounded the Emperor, he had commanded his emiſſary to give his billet into the hands of no one but the Prince himſelf. This pretended peaſant had juſt paſſed, when the detachment arrived to take poſſeſſion of the bridge.

An officer, with a numerous eſcort, ran, by order of the Empreſs, for the Grand Duke, who ſlept in another palace. The boy, already apprized of the dangers which threatened his life, awoke, ſurrounded by ſoldiers, and expreſſed ſymptoms of a terror, the impreſſion of which continued for a long time. His Governor, Panin, who till this moment had remained with his pupil, tried to diſpel his apprehenſions, took him in his arms, dreſſed in his night clothes as he was, and carried him thus to

his

his mother. She presented him from a balcony to the soldiery and the people. An innumerable crowd had collected. All the other regiments of the city had joined the regiments of guards. The acclamations were long redoubled, and all the caps of the crowd were thrown at the same instant into the air. A report was spread that the Emperor was approaching. The crowd driven back, but without tumult, divided, pressed together, and, in profound silence, made way for a train, which advanced slowly through the midst of them. It was a pompous funeral, which had passed through the principal streets, without any body's ever having known to whom it belonged. Soldiers, wearing mourning cloaks over their uniforms, carried torches in their hands, and whilst the whole attention of the crowd was riveted to the spot, the train gradually disappeared. Since that period, the Princess d'Aschekof has been several times spoken to concerning it, whose only answer has always been; "Our precautions were well taken."

It is probable that this machine was put in play, in order to diffuſe amongſt the populace and the ſlaves, a vague rumour of the death of the Emperor; to remove by this means, were it only for the moment, every idea of reſiſtance, and by thus joining ſurpriſe to ſeduction, to render the proclamation general and unanimous. And certain it is, of all this multitude which choaked up the ſtreets and the ſquare, ſcarcely twenty perſons, even in the Palace, knew preciſely what they were about. The commonalty and the ſoldiers not knowing whether the Emperor was really alive or dead, and continuing to repeat in their acclamations the word *houra*, which is nothing more than a cry of joy, without any other meaning, believed they were proclaiming the young Grand Duke, Emperor, and giving the Regency only to the mother. Several of the conſpirators, in their firſt eagerneſs to inform their friends, had written to them this falſe intelligence. The tumult had aſſumed an air of joy on this account.

account. No idea of injuſtice diſturbed the public happineſs, and friends embraced each other with mutual congratulations. But a manifeſto which was diſtributed throughout the city ſoon diſcloſed the true deſign: a printed manifeſto, which Odard, the Piedmonteſe, had concealed for ſeveral days in his apartment, not without the moſt deadly apprehenſions: and this man the next day ſaid, appearing to breathe more at his eaſe: "At length I am under no apprehenſions of being broke upon the wheel." This writing announced, "That the Empreſs Catharine the Second, yielding to the prayers of her people, had mounted the throne of her beloved country, to ſave it from ruin;" then after inveighing againſt the Emperor, ſhe kindled into indignation againſt the King of Pruſſia, and againſt the plundering of the clergy. Such was the language uſed by a German Princeſs, who has ſince cemented that alliance, and accompliſhed that pillage.

All the grandees, learning this news upon

upon their awaking, flocked to the palace; and it was not one of the leaſt intereſting ſcenes in this great drama, to behold their phyſiognomies expreſſive at once of joy and of uneaſineſs, and in which eagerneſs and ſmiles were mingled with paleneſs and apprehenſion. They beheld, on entering the palace, the celebration of a ſolemn maſs, prieſts receiving the oath of fidelity, and the Empreſs practiſing every art of ſeduction. A tumultuous council was held in her preſence, upon what courſe they ſhould next purſue. Each one excited by the danger, and endeavouring to make himſelf of importance, propoſed, and diſcovered ardor to execute. Being no longer under the neceſſity of taking any precautions againſt the city, which by this time was completely gained over, and being able to leave Peterſburgh behind, without any apprehenſion, it was determined that all this hoſt ſhould be inſtantly led againſt the Emperor. A great murmur which aroſe among the ſoldiers, interrupted the coun-

cil. Always alarmed for the ſafety of the Empreſs, ſtill perſuaded that the pretended aſſaſſins, diſpatched to kill her and her ſon, were going every moment to arrive, they conſidered her as too much expoſed in this vaſt palace, which being waſhed by the river on one ſide, and being ſtill unfiniſhed, appeared totally defenceleſs; they could not, they ſaid, anſwer for her ſafety. They demanded with loud cries, that ſhe ſhould be conducted to an ancient palace built of wood, much ſmaller, which overlooks the ſame ſquare, and which they could encompaſs round and round. The Empreſs accordingly croſſed the ſquare, amidſt the moſt tumultuous acclamations. Beer and brandy were diſtributed to the ſoldiers. All of them had reſumed their ancient uniforms, having thrown away, with marks of deriſion, a new uniform in the Pruſſian ſtyle, which the Emperor had juſt given them, and which, in that frozen climate, left the ſoldiers almoſt naked. They received with hiſſes ſuch as ran with precipitation

tation to clothe themſelves in this new dreſs; and the new caps, toſſed from hand to hand, like ſo many balls, became an amuſement to the populace.

One regiment alone maintained a chagrined and ſerious air: it was a very fine regiment of cavalry, of which the Emperor had been Colonel from his infancy, which he had ordered to town as ſoon as he had mounted the throne, and which he had permitted to rank with the regiments of guards. The officers of this corps had refuſed to march; they were all arreſted, and other officers, in different uniforms, were appointed to lead on the ſoldiers, whoſe ill will was evident.

Towards noon, the principal of the Ruſſian clergy, all of them old men of a venerable aſpect, (it is well known of what importance the ſmalleſt things, capable of affecting the imagination, become in ſuch deciſive moments) all with fine white hair, and long white beards, all dreſſed in ſplendid and dignified garments, carrying the ornaments of conſecration, the crown, the imperial

imperial globe, the ancient volumes, in peaceful and majeſtic proceſſion paſſed along the whole of this army, on which a ſentiment of reſpect impreſſed a momentary ſilence. They aſcended to the palace to conſecrate the Empreſs, and that ſpectacle imprinted on every heart an indeſcribable emotion, which ſeemed to legalize violence and uſurpation.

As ſoon as ſhe was conſecrated, ſhe dreſſed herſelf in the ancient uniform of the guards, which ſhe borrowed of a young officer of the ſame ſtature with herſelf. To the impreſſive ceremonies of religion ſucceeded a toilet in the martial ſtyle, in which the charms of gallantry added a ſtill livelier intereſt, in which this young and beautiful woman took, with the moſt ſeducing gracefulneſs, from the ſeveral noblemen who ſurrounded her, a hat, a ſword, and, above all, the ribbon of the firſt order of the Empire, which her huſband had quitted, with a determination no longer to wear any other than that of Pruſſia. In this

new

new dreſs ſhe mounted on horſeback at the gate of her palace, and accompanied by the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, likewiſe on horſeback, and in the uniform of the guards, ſhe rode round the grand ſquare, announced herſelf to the troops as having an intention to be herſelf their General; and by her ſmiling and intrepid air, ſhe gave to the multitude that confidence which ſhe herſelf had derived from them.

The regiments began to file off, in order to leave the city, and march againſt the Emperor. The Empreſs re-entered her palace, and dined cloſe to an open window, which looked towards the ſquare. From the manner in which ſhe held her glaſs, ſhe appeared to ſalute the troops, who anſwered by a long acclamation. She then remounted her horſe, and departed at the head of her army.

A whole city had changed its ſovereign, an army had revolted, yet without the leaſt diſorder; and after their departure, there remained not at Peterſburgh the leaſt

ſymptom of commotion. About ſix o'clock a regiment of three thouſand coſſacks, which was paſſing by at ſome diſtance, and which the emiſſaries of the Empreſs had fallen in with before thoſe of the Emperor, had paſſed through the city, in order to follow her, well armed, well mounted, and officered by men of ſingular politeneſs. This proceſſion had the appearance of the celebration of ſome feſtival, which impreſſed upon every imagination the idea of the good fortune of the Empreſs, and added to the public ſecurity.

A ſhort geographical deſcription will be neceſſary to elucidate the events which I am going to relate. The river Neva falls into the ſea at the extremity of the Gulf of Finland, and appears as if it were a prolongation of that Gulf. At twelve leagues diſtance from its mouth, and upon ſeveral iſlands where the breadth of the different channels forms a moſt delightful proſpect, ſtands the city of Peterſburgh, built about ſixty years ago, on a low and marſhy ſoil,

but

but which, by the want of ſolidity in the firſt haſtily conſtructed buildings, and by the frequency of conflagrations, is already, by means of the ruins, raiſed more than three feet. In going down the river, the right bank is ſtill uncultivated, and covered with extenſive foreſts. The left bank is bordered by a ridge of hills, which preſerve the ſame height throughout, until the two ſides of the river ſtretch out as far as the eye can reach, and leave between them nothing but a vaſt ſea. At this point, on the top of the heights, in a delightful ſituation, is the caſtle of Oranienbaum. It was built by the celebrated Menchikof; and upon the diſgrace of that favourite, the confiſcation of his property transferred it to the crown. It was the appropriate country reſidence where the Emperor had ſpent the days of his youth. For his inſtruction, a kind of fortreſs had been built there, the ramparts of which were ſcarcely ſix feet high, conſtructed merely to convey to the young Prince an idea of a great fortification,

cation, in itſelf uſeleſs for any purpoſe of defence. With the ſame view, they had collected an arſenal, of no uſe as a repoſitory of arms, and which could be conſidered only as a cabinet of military curioſities, among which were preſerved the moſt glorious trophies of the Empire, the ſtandards taken from the Swedes and Pruſſians. The Emperor was remarkably attached to this caſtle, and there he now was with three thouſand men of his own troops of Holſtein.

Oppoſite, and in ſight of this caſtle, in the very mouth of the river, is built, upon an iſland, the city of Cronſtadt. The houſes, conſtructed during the reign of Peter the Firſt, and always uninhabited, are beginning to tumble into ruins; its harbour is ſafe and commodious, and appears on that ſide of the iſland which looks to Oranienbaum. All this ſide is ſtrongly fiortified. The fortifications upon the other ſide have not been finiſhed, but this branch of the river, ſufficiently dangerous of itſelf,

ſelf, had been rendered impracticable, by throwing in enormous maſſes of rock. It was in the harbour of this iſland that a great part of the fleet, ready to ſail for Holſtein, well provided with every neceſſary, and fully manned, was ſtationed under the immediate direction of the Emperor. The other part of the fleet, equally under his command, was at Revel, an ancient city, ſituated farther off upon the ſame gulf.

Along the heights which hang over the river, between Oranienbaum and Peterſburgh, are built, in pleaſant woods, and at a little diſtance from each other, the country ſeats of the Ruſſian nobility. In the midſt of them is a magnificent palace built by Peter the firſt, on his return from France, in the hope of being able to imitate, in his gardens, by the aſſiſtance of the ſea, the water-works of Verſailles. It was here that they had juſt ſent to find the Empreſs; and her reſidence, as may be ſeen, was happily choſen: between Peterſburgh,

burgh, where the conſpiracy was going forward; Oranienbaum, where the court was; and the neighbouring coaſt of Finland, which was reſerved as her aſylum. It was to this caſtle, named Peterſhoff, that is, *Peterscourt*, that the Emperor was to come that very day, Saint Peter's day, to celebrate the feſtival of the Saint whoſe name he bore.

This Prince was in the moſt perfect ſecurity. When they informed him of the ſymptoms of a conſpiracy, and even told him the news of a conſpirator's having been arreſted, he replied, "He is ſome madman." He had ſet out from Oranienbaum, and was proceeding gaily, in a large open carriage, with his miſtreſs, the Pruſſian miniſter, and a ſelection of the fineſt women of his court. Every countenance appeared to be animated by the pleaſures of the feſtival; but at Peterſhoff, whither he had almoſt arrived, every thing was already in confuſion. They had diſcovered the flight of the Empreſs. They had

ſought

ſought for her in vain in the gardens and in the woods. A ſentinel ſaid he had ſeen, about four in the morning, two ladies go out of the park. Thoſe who arrived from Peterſburgh, not ſuſpecting what had been going on in the barracks at the time of their departure, not only brought no news, but affirmed with oaths that there was nothing new. One of theſe and one of the chamberlains of the Empreſs, were making the beſt of their way on foot, upon the road by which the Emperor was coming. They met his favourite, the aid-de-camp Goudowitz, who preceded him on horſeback. They thought it beſt to communicate the intelligence to him. The aid-de-camp returned with all ſpeed, ſtopped the coach, in ſpite of the Emperor, who called out, "What nonſenſe is this?" and approached to whiſper in his ear. The Emperor grew pale, and ſaid, "Let me be ſet down." He ſtopped ſome time on the road, and queſtioned his aid-de-camp with great eagerneſs; and, perceiving they

were

were near one of the park gates, he ordered all the ladies to alight, left them in the middle of the road ſurpriſed and alarmed at this movement, of the cauſe of which they were ignorant; only told them to join him at the caſtle by the alleys of the park, and remounted the carriage precipitately with a few men. He drove with prodigious ſpeed, ran, upon his arrival, to the chamber of the Empreſs, looked under the bed, opened the cloſets, ſtruck the cieling and the wainſcots with his cane; and, ſeeing his miſtreſs running towards him ſurrounded by all theſe young women, he cried out to her, "I was in the right when I told you ſhe was capable of any thing." Around him, all his courtiers, ſuſpecting in their hearts the fatal truth, kept a profound ſilence; whether becauſe they perceived already all they had to provide againſt, in miſtruſt of each other, or even perhaps dreading at ſuch a time to incenſe their ſovereign by alarming him. The loweſt of the domeſtics, inſtructed by the

peaſant

peaſants whom they had met in the woods, or by their own conjectures, were already recounting to each other what was going on at Peterſburgh, whilſt the court appeared to ſuſpect nothing of the matter. A foreign lackey arriving from the city, (he was a young Frenchman, who, full of the notions of his own country, having ſeen the tnmult commence, without ever conceiving what was the object of it) very much aſtoniſhed at the conſternation which he found at Peterſhoff, happened to ſay, with ſomewhat of precipitation, "that the Empreſs was not loſt; that ſhe was at Peterſburgh; and that the feſtival of St. Peter was going to be kept there in a ſuperior ſtyle of elegance, for that all the troops were drawn up in arms." Whilſt the Emperor, through the ſimplicity of this recital, diſcovered that his reign was at an end, a peaſant, taking advantage of the general confuſion, entered, making, according to the cuſtom of his country, a number of ſigns of the croſs and proſtrations, advanced towards the Emperor

in ſilence, drew a billet out of his boſom, and put it into his hands with eyes lifted up to heaven.

It was that ſervant in diſguiſe, who, in obedience to the orders which he had received from his maſter, to put this billet into no other hands but thoſe of the Prince himſelf, had already to no purpoſe ſought to find acceſs to him in the woods. Every one, in ſilence and uncertainty, ſurrounded the Emperor, who, having caſt his eyes over the billet, read it aloud. It was conceived in theſe terms: "The regiments of guards are under arms, the Empreſs is at their head; nine o'clock ſtrikes, ſhe is entering into the church of Cazan; all the people appear to follow this movement, and the faithful ſubjects of your Majeſty do not appear." The Emperor exclaimed, "Well, Gentlemen, you ſee that I judged right." Immediately the principal man of the empire, the High Chancellor Woronſof, having ſpoken of his influence over the minds of the people, and over that of the Empreſs,

Empreſs, propoſed going to Peterſburgh; and indeed, upon reaching the Empreſs, he ſagely repreſented to her all the conſequences of that enterpriſe. She replied, pointing to the people, and the army, "It is not my act, but that of the whole nation." The High Chancellor replied, that he ſaw it very plainly, took the oath to her, and haſtened to add, "That being unable to ſerve her on a military expedition, and fearing after the repreſentations he had juſt made to her, that he might be an object of ſuſpicion, he entreated her to put him under arreſt at his own houſe, under the guard of an officer, who ſhould on no account quit him;" and thus, whatever might be the event, he found himſelf ſecure on both ſides.

In the mean time the Emperor ſent orders to his troops of Holſtein to come to him immediately, with their field-pieces. Huſſars were diſpatched in every direction toward Peterſburgh to gain intelligence; to all the neighbouring villages to aſſemble the

the peaſantry ; and to all the regiments which had filed off to the environs, to recal them if it was yet time. He appointed, as commander in chief, that Chamberlain of the Empreſs who had come to meet him, to give him notice of her flight. He gave orders to ſend to Peterſburgh for his own regiment, and many laid hold of that pretext to deſert him. He flew about like a madman. He gave directions inſtantly to put the Empreſs to death. He frequently called for drink. He dictated againſt her two long manifeſtoes, filled with the moſt bitter invectives. He employed a great number of his courtiers in tranſcribing, and of huſſars in diſtributing, copies of them. Finally, in this extremity he reſolved to leave off the Pruſſian uniform and ribbon, and reſumed the inſignia of the Ruſſian empire.

This whole court traverſed the gardens, ſcattered about, and loſt in conſternation: but Munick wiſhed to ſave his benefactor. The reputation of his former victories had procured

procured him admiſſion into this Court, ſo military-mad; and after twenty years baniſhment, finding nothing there but that new exerciſe, become the univerſal mania of Europe, and in which the youngeſt lieutenant infallibly ſurpaſſes the oldeſt general, he had hitherto preſerved ſilence. But in times of imminent danger, great talents reſume, of themſelves, all their aſcendency; and without doubt, he promiſed himſelf, in ſaving the Emperor, to become once more maſter of the Empire. He made a calculation to this Prince both of the advantage of time and force poſſeſſed by the Empreſs; concluded, "that ſhe would arrive in a few hours with twenty thouſand men and a formidable train of artillery;" proved, "that neither Peterſhoff, where they were, nor its vicinity, could poſſibly be put in a ſtate of defence;" and added, "that from the knowledge which he had of the Ruſſian ſoldiery, a ſlight reſiſtance would only occaſion the maſſacre of the Emperor, and of the women who accompanied him; that

Cronſtadt preſented to him both ſafety and victory; that it contained a numerous garriſon, and a fleet ready for ſea; that all the women he had about him would become ſo many hoſtages; that every thing depended on gaining a ſingle day; that this popular movement, this commotion of a night, would ſubſide of itſelf, or, if it ſhould continue, the Emperor might oppoſe at leaſt equal force, and make Peterſburgh tremble."

This advice revived their drooping ſpirits. Even thoſe who had already meditated their eſcape, ſeeing the event becoming uncertain, reſolved to follow the Emperor, to remain attached to his fortune, if he proved ſucceſsful, or to watch the opportunity, if he failed, of betraying him for their own advantage. A General who was devoted to him, was ſent to Cronſtadt, to take the command of that city, and an aid-de-camp returned to announce, "that the garriſon remained ſteady in their allegiance, that they were determined to die

die for the Emperor, that he was expected there, and that they were labouring with the moſt earneſt zeal to prepare for its defence."

In the interval his Holſteineſe troops having arrived, and the certainty of an aſylum affording him ſome ſecurity, he was anxious that they ſhould be brought into action. His military mania ſeizing him, he ſaid, that it would be baſe to fly without having ſeen the enemy." Two yachts had been brought cloſe to the water-ſide; and having in vain attempted to perſuade him to embark, buffoons and favourite lacqueys were employed to bring him to that reſolution, but he treated them as poltrons. He examined what advantage might be taken of ſome little heights. While he was loſing himſelf in making theſe ſilly diſpoſitions, intelligence was received by ſome huſſars, who had been carried off by thoſe of the Empreſs in advancing to reconnoitre, that in Peterſburgh every thing had yielded to this Princeſs,

and

and that she was at the head of twenty thousand men. While the clock was striking eight, an aid-de-camp arrived post-haste to announce, that this army, in order of battle, was upon its march to Petershoff. At this news the Emperor, followed by his whole court, hurried to the water-side, threw themselves on board the two yachts; and the formidable expedient which Munick had suggested, was followed merely from fear. Perhaps we ought not to omit mentioning one trait, unimportant indeed in itself, did it not demonstrate with what profound indifference one may be a witness of such tremendous events. An eye-witness of this flight, who remained quietly on shore, having given an account of it the next day, was asked, "how it was possible for him to refrain from following his master, on an embarkation to contend for his crown and life?" He replied, "I was, indeed, ready to embark, but it was late, the wind was in the north, and I had no cloak."

They

They made for Cronſtadt with preſs of oar and ſail; but, ſince the anſwer brought by the aid-de-camp, there had happened in that city a very extraordinary change. In the tumultuous council, which in the morning had been held at Peterſburgh, while the inſurrection was at the height, the city of Cronſtadt had been for a long time overlooked. A young German officer was the firſt who mentioned its name, and that ſingle word procured for him a well-merited recompenſe. A Ruſſian, Vice-Admiral Talizine, undertook to go to that city, and departed alone in a ſhallop. He forbade his bargemen, as they valued their lives, to tell whence he came. On his arrival at Cronſtadt, the Commandant, who had given orders, that no one ſhould enter without his expreſs permiſſion, happened to be on the ſpot as he approached, and perceiving he came unattended, permitted him to come on ſhore. He aſked him the news: Talizine replied, "That he knew of none; that at his country-houſe,

houſe, which he had juſt left, he heard a rumour of ſome diſturbances at Peterſburgh; and that as his proper ſtation was on board, he had made the beſt of his way to his poſt." The Commandant believed him, but as ſoon as he had parted with Talizine, the latter collected a few ſoldiers, propoſed to them to arreſt him, and ſaid to them, "the Emperor is dethroned; you muſt make a merit of giving up Cronſtadt to the Empreſs, and your fortune is made." They followed him. He arreſted the Commandant; and having aſſembled the garriſon and the marine troops, he harangued them, and perſuaded them to take the oath to the Empreſs. Already they perceived, at a diſtance, the two imperial galleys; and Talizine, become maſter of that city by a bold ſtroke, was ſenſible, that the ſight alone of the Emperor would expoſe every thing again to danger, and that it was neceſſary to prevent men from purſuing their reflections. Immediately, by his order, the alarm-bell was rung in the

the city ; the whole garriſon, prepared to fire, line the ramparts ; two hundred matches blaze at the touch-holes of as many cannon. Towards ten in the evening, the Emperor's yacht arrives, and they prepared to diſembark. A cry is raiſed of, "Who lives ?"—"The Emperor."—"There is no Emperor." At this terrible word, he raiſed himſelf up, advances, and drawing aſide his cloak to ſhew his order, he ſays, "It is I ; don't you know me ? and prepares to come on ſhore. The whole guards joined to the ſentinels on duty, preſented their bayonets, the Commandant threatened to fire if they did not retreat ; the Emperor fell into the arms of thoſe who followed him ; and from the ſhore Talizine calls aloud to the two yachts to puſh off, or he would pour a complete diſcharge of the artillery upon them. The whole multitude repeated, "Off with the galley, off with the galley"—with ſuch a violent rage, that the Captain, under the ſhower of bullets which was going to tear him to pieces, took

took a ſpeaking trumpet, and cried, "We are going to move off; give us time to unmoor." And that no time might be loſt, he ordered the cables to be cut. The ſound of the ſpeaking trumpet produced, in the city, a tremendous ſilence; and, as the galley retired, a ſhout ſtill more tremendous of "Long live the Empreſs Catharine." Whilſt they were retreating with the utmoſt exertion of the rowers, the Emperor ſaid, weeping, "The plot is general; I have foreſeen this conſpiracy from the firſt day of my reign." He went down, rather dead than alive, into the cabin of the yacht, whither his miſtreſs, and the father of that young woman, were the only perſons who followed him. The two veſſels, when got beyond the reach of cannon ſhot, ſtopped; and, no orders being given, they remained as if in expectation of them, lying upon their oars. The whole night, which was calm, paſſed away in this manner, Munick remaining quietly upon deck, contemplating the beauty of the evening;

and

and ſo true it is, that the pleaſant may unite with the terrible; ſome of the young women, as they themſelves have related, repeated to each other in a whiſper, the proverb from the comedy: "What had we to do in this galley?"*

When the whole troops of the Empreſs had left the city, and were arranged in order of battle, it was too late for the army to make much progreſs the ſame day. That Princeſs, from the fatigues of the preceding night, and of ſuch a day, took a few hours reſt at a caſtle on the road. On her arrival at this place, ſhe had called for ſome refreſhments, and had part of them preſented to ſome of the ſubaltern officers, who were zealous in offering her their ſervices; ſhe ſaid to them, "I wiſh to have nothing that I cannot divide with you."

They intended marching againſt the Holſteineſe troops, which had been drawn up before Peterſhoff; but after the embark-

* This excellent witticiſm can only be underſtood by thoſe who have read the "Fourberies de ſcapin" of Molière.

ation of the Emperor, they had received orders to return to Oranienbaum, and Peterſhoff was evacuated. However, the peaſants of the neighbouring villages, whom they had ſent to collect, were arrived there, armed with pitch-forks and ſcythes, and, finding neither troops nor orders, waited, in a ſtate of total confuſion, to ſee what they were to do, under the command of the huſſars, who had aſſembled them. Orlof, the firſt volunteer in the army, who advanced about five in the morning to reconnoitre, fell upon theſe poor fellows with blows of the flat ſide of his ſabre, crying aloud, "Long live the Empreſs!" They fled, throwing down their arms, and repeating, "Long live the Empreſs!" The army having then advanced without any obſtacle beyond Peterſhoff, the Empreſs re-entered as ſovereign into that caſtle, from which ſhe had gone out as a fugitive twenty four hours before.

In the mean time the Emperor, who had remained on the water, and reduced from a power ſo vaſt in the ſpace of a few hours

to

to two pleaſure yachts, his uſeleſs fortreſs of Oranienbaum, and a few diſpirited foreign troops, without ammunition, and without proviſions, between a fleet ready to pour forth its whole thunder upon him, an army in the firſt rage of ſedition, and two cities which rejected him, called field-marſhal Munick into the cabin of his veſſel, and ſaid to him, "Field-marſhal, I ought to have followed your advice ſooner; but under the preſent circumſtances, you, who have experienced ſo many extremities, what is there ſtill left me to do?" Munick replied, "That nothing was loſt; that he muſt, without loſing an inſtant, puſh forward to Revel, there take a ſhip of war, ſet ſail for Pruſſia, where his army was, re-enter his ſtates at the head of eighty thouſand men, and he pledged himſelf, that in ſix weeks, he would give him back his empire, in a ſtate of ſubjection."

The courtiers, and the young women had entered with Munick, to hear from his lips, what hope yet remained; they replied, "That the rowers had not ſufficient

ſtrength

ſtrength left to carry them to Revel."— "Very well," ſaid Munick, "we will all put our hands to the oar and help them." The whole court ſhuddered at this propoſition; and, whether flattery had not yet forſaken this unhappy Prince, or whether he was ſurrounded by treachery; for how is it poſſible to diſtinguiſh the difference of their language? they repreſented to him, "That he was very far from being reduced to ſuch an extremity; that it did not become ſo powerful an Emperor to depart from his kingdom in a ſingle veſſel; that it was not poſſible the whole nation could have revolted againſt him, and that without doubt the intention of this commotion was to effect a reconciliation between him and his wife."

Peter made up his mind to attempt a reconciliation; and, with the air of a man who is going to grant a pardon, he ordered himſelf to be landed at Oranienbaum. But his domeſtics, melted into tears, having come to receive him on the beach, he ſaid

ſaid to them, " My children, all is over with us," and their conſternation recalled all his own. By them he was informed, that the army of the Empreſs was already at hand, and immediately he gave ſecret orders to ſaddle, with the utmoſt diſpatch, one of his fleeteſt horſes, determined to fly alone, and in diſguiſe, till he ſhould reach Poland. But the agitation of his mind very ſoon reducing him to a ſtate of indeciſion, his miſtreſs, ſeduced by the hopes of finding an aſylum, and perhaps, at the ſame time, a throne for herſelf, perſuaded him to ſend to the Empreſs to aſk permiſſion for them to depart together for the Dutchy of Holſtein. This was, according to her idea, giving up every thing to the Empreſs, who could deſire nothing better than an accommodation ſo favourable to her ambitious views; and, when the ſervants of the Emperor exclaimed, " Father, ſhe will put you to death," his miſtreſs replied to them, " Why will you terrify your maſter ?"

This was his laſt reſolution ; and imme-

diately on the general repreſentation, that the only poſſible means of eſcaping the firſt fury of the ſoldiers, was not to make the ſlighteſt reſiſtance, he gave orders to diſmantle every thing which could have contributed to a ſhort defence, cauſed the cannon to be diſmounted, his ſoldiers to be diſbanded, and to lay down their arms. At this ſpectacle, Munick, fired with indignation, demanded, "If he did not know how to die like an Emperor, at the head of his troops? If you are afraid," ſaid he to him, "of the ſtroke of a ſabre, take a crucifix in your hand, they will not dare to touch you; and leave me to lead the ſoldiers to battle." The Emperor perſiſted in the determination which he had formed. He wrote to his wife, that he reſigned to her the Empire of Ruſſia, and aſked her permiſſion to retire into his Dutchy of Holſtein, in company with the *frail* Woronſof, and his aid-de-camp Goudowitz. The Chamberlain, whom he had named his commander in chief, was charged with the delivery of this

this letter; and, in the mean time, all thoſe of the courtiers of this Prince who could find ſmall boats, threw themſelves aboard, and, eager to abandon him, haſtened to ſwell the new court.

The Empreſs, in reply, ſent him a renunciation to ſign, which was couched in the following terms:

" During the ſhort period of my unlimited government of the Ruſſian Empire, I have clearly diſcovered that my powers were not ſufficient to ſupport ſo vaſt a burden, and that it was a taſk far above my abilities to rule that empire, not merely as a ſovereign, but in any manner whatever; I have likewiſe perceived the convulſion it has undergone, which muſt have iſſued in its total ruin, and, at the ſame time, have overwhelmed me in eternal diſgrace. After mature deliberation, therefore, upon the ſubject, I declare, without compulſion, and in the moſt ſolemn manner, to the Empire of Ruſſia, and to all the world, that I renounce, for my whole life, the government

ernment of the ſaid empire, not wiſhing to reign over it either as a ſovereign, or under any other form of government, and without ever aſpiring to attain to it by any aſſiſtance whatſoever. In teſtimony of which, I make an oath before God and the whole univerſe, having written and ſubſcribed this renunciation with my own hand."

What was any longer to be feared from a man who could ſo far demean himſelf as to tranſcribe and ſign ſuch a writing as this? Or what opinion muſt we form of a nation to whom this man was an object of terror?

The ſame Chamberlain, after having carried this renunciation to the Empreſs, returned immediately with orders to make the ſoldiers of Holſtein lay down their arms. This they did with marks of indignation, and were confined in barns. He then cauſed the Emperor to go into a coach, accompanied by his miſtreſs and his favourite, and carried them off, without any eſcort, to Peterſhoff.

Peter,

Peter, in putting himſelf into the power of his wife, was not entirely deſtitute of hope. The firſt troops which he met had never before ſeen him; they conſiſted of thoſe three thouſand Coſſacks whom chance alone had brought to witneſs this event; they obſerved a profound ſilence, and the emotion which he could not ſuppreſs at their appearance, did not excite in them the leaſt uneaſineſs. But as ſoon as the army perceived him, the unanimous ſhouts of "Long live Catharine," began to reſound on every ſide. It was in the midſt of this new proclamation, continued with unremitting fury, that he paſſed through all the regiments. His head turned. On arriving at the grand ſtair-caſe, and alighting from the coach, his miſtreſs was carried off by the ſoldiers, who tore off her ribbon. His favourite preſuming to anſwer the ſoldiers with a haughty air, and to reproach them with the crime they were committing, was interrupted with loud burſts of laughter. The Emperor aſcend-

ed

ed alone, agitated with rage. They cried to him: "Undreſs yourſelf;" and no one of theſe rebels putting forth his hand to aſſiſt him, he himſelf tore off his ribbon, his ſword, his clothes, ſaying, "Well then, I am at your diſpoſal." They permitted him to ſtand ſome minutes in his ſhirt, and barefooted, expoſed to the deriſion of the ſoldiers. Thus was Peter forever ſeparated from his miſtreſs and his favourite, and ſhortly after they were all three carried away in different directions under ſtrong eſcorts.

The city of Peterſburgh had been in a ſtate of anxious expectation ſince the departure of the Empreſs; four and twenty hours had elapſed without any intelligence from her; and it could be eaſily perceived, from the different rumours which were circulated, that upon the ſlighteſt glimpſe of hope the Emperor would ſtill have found partiſans there. Foreigners were not without terror, being well aware, that true Ruſſians, deteſting not only new manners, but every

every thing which comes to them from other countries, have ſometimes demanded of their ſovereigns, as the reward of their ſervices, permiſſion to maſſacre ſtrangers. Whatever the event might be, they were under dreadful apprehenſions of the effects of the licentiouſneſs or the fury of the ſoldiery.

Towards five o'clock in the evening the report of cannon was heard at a diſtance; the attention was general. They were ſoon able to diſtinguiſh, from the regular intervals of each diſcharge, that it was a ſalute of rejoicing; the event was eaſily conjectured; and from that moment nothing was perceivable in the general mind but a ſimilar diſpoſition.

The Empreſs ſlept at Peterſhoff, and next morning, at her levee, her former confidants, who had abandoned her in the hour of misfortune, the young females who had always followed the Emperor, the courtiers, who, in order to govern this Prince, had for ſo many years, fomented the

the hatred which be bore to his wife, came in a body to proſtrate their faces in the duſt before her. Many of them were relations of the *frail* Woronſof, and the Princeſs d'Aſchekof her ſiſter, perceiving them on the ground, threw herſelf down amongſt them, ſaying, "Madam, here is my family which I have ſacrificed to you." The Empreſs received them all with the moſt faſcinating kindneſs. In their preſence ſhe preſented to her the ribbon and the jewels of her ſiſter. Munick was in this crowd; ſhe ſaid to him: "You had a wiſh to fight againſt me." "Yes, Madam," he replied, "and now it is my duty to fight in your cauſe." She manifeſted ſo much eſteem and kindneſs for him, that ſoon after, admiring the genius of this Princeſs, he offered to communicate to her in a ſeries of audiences, every circumſtance which a long life ſpent in the practice of the arts, in war, in the adminiſtration of affairs, and in exile had made known to him, reſpecting all the parts of that vaſt empire; whether

er

er it was that he was actually touched with the generous and unexpectedly gracious reception ſhe had given him, or whether, as is more generally believed, his ambition ſtill prompted him to make this attempt.

That ſame day, the return to the city was a triumph, and the ſoldiers, in their rejoicings, were kept under the ſame ſtrict diſcipline as in their inſurrection.

The Empreſs was rather overheated: a violent eruption of reddiſh ſpots appeared on her ſkin. She ſpent a few days in repoſe to cool herſelf. This new court preſented a ſpectacle highly worthy of attention; in which the rejoicings for a ſucceſs ſo ſignal did not prevent any one from exerciſing the moſt unremitting vigilance; the moſt exact precaution reigned in the midſt of the diſorder, in which the courtiers were already trying to regain, by their ſkill in the arts of a court, the advantage over thoſe officious conſpirators, elated by the ſervice they had juſt rendered; in

which the different ranks of royal favour, not being yet aſcertained, every one wiſhed to appear what he had a pretenſion to become.

It was during thoſe early days that the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, entering the apartment of the Empreſs with a liberty rather too familiar, perceived, with aſtoniſhment, Orlof on a long chair, with his leg uncovered, and the Empreſs herſelf dreſſing a contuſion which he had received on that leg. The Princeſs uſed the freedom to expoſtulate with her on ſuch an exceſs of kindneſs; and, ſoon afterwards, on ſeeing more clearly how the caſe ſtood, ſhe aſſumed the tone of a ſevere cenſor. Her projects of liberty; her eagerneſs to take a lead in ſtate affairs; the intelligence received from foreign countries, in which the honour of the conſpiracy was univerſally aſcribed to her, whereas Catharine wiſhed it to appear, that ſhe had been elevated to the throne by election, and had perhaps actually perſuaded herſelf that this was the caſe;

caſe; in a word, the whole taken together, gave high offence; and her diſgrace was already reſolved on, during the days of a bright ſunſhine of favour, which was granted to keep up appearances.

It was not long before Orlof engaged general attention. That tender familiarity which is the conſequence of an attachment of long ſtanding, was obſerved to exiſt between the Empreſs and this man, who was till that time unknown. The aſtoniſhment of the court was extreme. The grandees, many of whom believed that they had acquired rights over the heart of their ſovereign, had no conception that, notwithſtanding his very obſcurity, this rival could have eſcaped them, and they perceived, with the moſt violent indignation, that they had been labouring merely to exalt him. Whether it was boldneſs on his part, or a formed deſign to reduce his rivals to ſilence, or a premeditated concert between his miſtreſs and him, to juſtify the grandeur ſhe deſigned to laviſh on him, he had

had the infolence to ſay to her, at a public dinner, "That he was abſolute maſter of the guards, and that to dethrone her, he had but to ſpeak the word." Every one preſent was highly offended, indignant replies were made by ſome; but ſuch good ſervants were but indifferent courtiers; they ruined themſelves, and the ambition of Orlof overleaped all bounds.

The city of Moſcow, the capital of the Empire, received the news of the revolution in a manner which gave much uneaſineſs. It is in this great city that the Muſcovite nation does in reality reſide, Peterſburgh being only the reſidence of the court. Five regiments compoſed the garriſon, and the governor, having cauſed to be given to each ſoldier twenty rounds of ſhot, aſſembled them on the great ſquare of the ancient palace of the Czars, an old citadel called the Cremeline, built four centuries ago, and which was the firſt cradle of the Muſcovite power. Hither he ſummoned all the people, who, alarmed at the

the distribution of the cartridges, but at the same time attracted by curiosity, came flocking from all parts, and entered in as great a crowd as the fortress was sufficient to contain. The governor then read aloud the manifesto, by which the Empress announced her accession to the throne, and the fall of her husband; and when he had done reading it, he cried out: "Long live the Empress Catharine the second;" but all this immense crowd, and the five regiments, observed a profound silence. He repeated the same exclamation; the same silence continued. He was interrupted only by a hollow murmuring of the soldiers, who muttered among themselves, that the regiments of guards should dispose of the throne at their pleasure. The governor earnestly pressed the officers who surrounded him, to join in the acclamation; and they re-commenced together the shout of "Long live the Empress," trembling all the while for fear of being massacred by the soldiers and the

people, and immediately orders were given for the troops to ſeparate.

Six days had now elapſed ſince the revolution, and this great event appeared to be entirely finiſhed, without any act of violence having been committed, which could produce odious impreſſions. Peter was confined in a pleaſant villa called Robſchak, ſix leagues diſtant from Peterſburgh. On the road he had requeſted to have ſome cards, of which he conſtructed a kind of fort, ſaying at the ſame time, "I ſhall ſee no other while I live." On his arrival at this country ſeat, he had made a requeſt to have his violin, his dog, and his negro.

But the ſoldiers were aſtoniſhed at what they had done; they could not imagine by what enchantment it was that they had been ſo far carried away, as to dethrone the grandſon of Peter the Great, to place his crown on the head of a female German. The greater part of them, without deſign and without any idea, had been hurried along by the movements of their companions;

ions; and each of them, ſhrinking back into his own littleneſs, after the pleaſure of diſpoſing of a crown had evaporated, retained no feeling but that of remorſe. The ſailors, who had not been in the leaſt degree concerned in the inſurrection, openly reproached the guards, in the public houſes, with having ſold their Emperor for beer. Pity, which pleads the cauſe of the worſt of criminals, made its voice to be heard in every heart. One night a troop of ſoldiers, attached to the Empreſs, aſſembled in a riotous manner, through a falſe alarm, exclaiming, "that their mother was in danger." It was neceſſary to awake her, that they might have a ſight of her. The following night, another tumult aroſe, ſtill more alarming. So long as the life of the Emperor left a pretext for diſquietude, it was believed that there could be no tranquillity.

One of the counts Orlof, for, from the firſt day, this title had been given them, that ſame ſoldier, nicknamed the *Balafré*, who

who had ſuppreſſed the billet of the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, and one named Teplof, who had riſen from the meaneſt employments, by a ſingular art of deſtroying his rivals, preſented themſelves together before this unhappy prince: they announced to him, on their entrance, that they were come to dine with him, and, according to the cuſtom in Ruſſia, glaſſes of brandy were brought in before the repaſt. That which the Emperor drank, was a glaſs of poiſon. Whether they were in haſte to carry the news of their own exploit, or whether the very horribility of the deed prompted them to hurry it to a concluſion, a moment after they poured out for him a ſecond glaſs. Already his entrails were on fire, and the atrocity of their phyſiognomies exciting his ſuſpicion, he refuſed this glaſs: they employed violence, to force it down his throat, and he, in repelling them. In this dreadful ſtruggle, in order to ſtifle his cries, which now began to be heard at a diſtance, they threw themſelves

themſelves upon him, ſeized him by the throat, and threw him down; but as he defended himſelf with all the ſtrength which the laſt deſpair communicates, and as they avoided giving him any wound, beginning to be afraid on their own account, they called to their aſſiſtance two officers who had the charge of his perſon, and who were at that moment without, at the gate of his priſon. One of theſe was the youngeſt of the princes Baratinſki, and the other was named Potemkin, a youth of about ſeventeen. They had diſplayed ſo much zeal in the conſpiracy, that notwithſtanding their extreme youth, they had been entruſted with the command of this guard. They ran in, and three of theſe murderers bound a napkin tight round the neck of the unfortunate Emperor, whilſt Orlof, with his two knees, preſſed upon his breaſt and ſtopped his breath; in this manner they ſtrangled him, and he remained lifeleſs in their hands.

It is not known with any certainty, what ſhare

ſhare the Empreſs had in accompliſhing this event; but it is an undoubted fact, that the ſame day on which it happened, as this Princeſs was ſitting ſtown to dinner with a great deal of gaiety, that ſame Orlof entered, with his hair all diſhevelled, covered with ſweat and duſt, his clothes torn, his phyſiognomy agitated, and filled with horror and precipitation. On his entrance, his glaring and diſturbed eyes ſought thoſe of the Empreſs. She aroſe in ſilence, and went into a cloſet whither he followed her, and a few moments afterwards, ſhe ordered Count Panin to be called, whom ſhe had already named her miniſter; ſhe informed him that the Emperor was dead, and conſulted him on the manner in which this death ſhould be announced to the public. Panin adviſed her to let one night paſs, and to publiſh the news of it the next day, as if it had been received during the night-time. Having agreed to follow this advice, the Empreſs re-entered with the ſame countenance, and

and continued her dinner with the ſame gaiety. The next day, when it was reported that Peter was dead in conſequence of a hemorrhoidal colic, ſhe appeared bathed in tears, and publiſhed her grief by an edict.

The body was carried back to Peterſburgh to be expoſed there. The face was black, and the neck torn. In ſpite of theſe horrible marks, in order to lull aſleep thoſe emotions which were beginning to cauſe alarm, and to prevent the poſſibility of any impoſtor, on a future day, diſturbing the empire under his name, it was left for three days expoſed to all the people, habited ſimply in the dreſs of a Holſteineſe officer. His ſoldiers, now become free, but all of them diſarmed, mingled themſelves among this crowd, and on beholding their ſovereign, their air was expreſſive of pity, of contempt, and a kind of regret mixed with ſhame.

They were immediately afterwards embarked, in order to be carried back to their own

own country ; but, to complete their cruel deſtiny, almoſt all thoſe unhappy wretches periſhed in a ſtorm. A few of them had ſaved themſelves from the wreck, on the rocks adjoining to the ſea-coaſts ; but were there ſwept away by the billows, while the commandant of Cronſtadt was ſending to Peterſburgh, to aſk permiſſion to give them aſſiſtance.

The Empreſs was in haſte to cauſe all the relations of the deceaſed Emperor to depart for Holſtein ; but ſhe ſent them back with honour, and even gave the government of that dutchy to Prince George. Biren, who had ceded to this Prince his rights to the dutchy of Courland, ſaw himſelf, by this removal, reeſtabliſhed in his pretenſions ; and the Empreſs, wiſhing to deſtroy the then reigning Prince, that ſhe might exerciſe the ſole dominion over it, and that ſhe might have no obſtacle to her projects upon Poland, not knowing what to do with ſuch a man at her court as Biren, ſhe ſent him back to

aſſume

aſſume the government in that ſovereignty. On hearing the news of the revolution, Poniatouſki, believing her to be now at liberty, was going to fly and preſent himſelf before her; but, reſtrained by more prudent conſiderations, he advanced no farther than the frontiers, where he remained, expecting every moment permiſſion to repair to Peterſburgh. He had, ever ſince his departure, given proofs of a paſſion the moſt conſtant. We might adduce a ſingular inſtance of the ardor of his attachment. This young man, having left Ruſſia with precipitation, had it not in his power, in a country where the arts are ſo little cultivated, to procure a portrait of his miſtreſs, but was able, from memory, and, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, by dictating to the artiſt, to procure a painting which bore a perfect reſemblance to her. She always knew, by flattering his paſſion, how to keep him at a diſtance; and, in a ſhort time, ſhe employed the Ruſſian armies, who are deſirous on all occaſions to ſojourn in Po-

land, to give him the crown of that kingdom. She engaged the Prince d'Anhalt-Zerbſt, her brother, not to ſerve under any power: but ſhe did not allow him to come to her court, avoiding, with extreme attention, every thing which could recal to the minds of the Ruſſians that ſhe was a foreigner, and excite an apprehenſion of their falling back under the German yoke. Every ſovereign haſtened to acknowledge her, one excepted; the Emperor of China, who has vaſt frontiers in common with Ruſſia: he refuſed to receive her ambaſſadors, and conveyed to her this determination, that he would have with her neither alliance, nor commerce, nor any communication whatever.

One of her firſt concerns was to recal the old chancellor Beſtuchef, who, then taking honour to himſelf from his very exile, filled the whole court with portraits of himſelf in his habit of diſgrace. She puniſhed, but not rigorouſly, the Frenchman Breſſan, who had warned the Emperor of his

his danger; ſhe permitted him to retain his fortune, and appeared only to ſatisfy the jealouſy of the courtiers by depriving him of the ribbon of the third order of the Empire. She was not ſlow in giving Count Schouvaloff to underſtand that he muſt diſappear, and, with a barbarous pleaſantry, ſhe ordered to preſent to this favourite of the deceaſed Empreſs, an old negro buffoon, a favourite of the late Emperor. After having begun to re-eſtabliſh order in every department of the ſtate, ſhe went to Moſcow to be conſecrated in the chapel of the ancient Czars. That capital beheld her without earneſtneſs and without joy. When ſhe paſſed through the ſtreets, the people retired, but her ſon was always ſurrounded by a crowd. There were even conſpiracies formed againſt her. Of theſe the Piedmonteſe Odart was the diſcoverer: he betrayed all his ancient friends, who, already diſſatisfied with the Empreſs, had entered into the new plots; the only recompenſe he demanded was money. To

all

all the propoſitions which the Empreſs made to him of raiſing him to dignities, his uniform reply was, "Madam, give me money," and, when he had obtained it, he returned to his own country.

She recalled to court, after ſix months had paſſed, the ſame Goudowitz, who had manifeſted ſo ſtrong an attachment to the Emperor, and he ſaw his fidelity recompenſed by the advances of the handſomeſt women there. She granted to the *frail* Woronſof, her unworthy rival, permiſſion to come to Moſcow, and live amidſt her family, where ſhe found her ſiſter the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, with whom all that remained of an exploit ſo brilliant was a pregnancy, a ſullen indignation, and a melancholy knowledge of mankind.

The whole ſecurity of this reign ſeemed to be confided to the hands of the Orlofs alone. The favourite ſoon undermined the grand maſter of artillery, Villebois, and obtained for himſelf that place and the regiment. The Balafré remained in a regiment

of

of guards, with a commanding influence over the whole corps; and a third brother got the firſt place in the ſenate. A bloody cataſtrophe having terminated the days of the unfortunate Ivan, the Empreſs had no dread of being ſupplanted in the throne, except by her own ſon, againſt whom ſhe appeared to have rendered herſelf perfectly ſecure, by confiding the principal adminiſtration of affairs to Count Panin, who had always been entruſted with the education of the young Prince. The credit of this miniſter, ſerving as a counterpoiſe to the power of Orlof, the court was divided into two parties, the remains of two conſpiracies; and the Empreſs, between theſe two parties, ruled, of herſelf, with ſo much glory, that the fame of her adminiſtration attracted from Europe and Aſia a numerous people into her ſtates.

LETTER SECOND,*

TO THE

COUNTESS D'EGMONT.

MADAM,

SOME perſons have ſtarted doubts reſpecting the authenticity of this hiſtory. This is the only kind of criticiſm which the hiſtorian feels it his duty to refute; and I conceive it to be incumbent on me to juſtify, in your eyes, the protection which you have afforded to my work.

Permit me, Madam, to recal a few facts to your remembrance. When it was firſt noiſed abroad, that ſuch a work was in exiſtence, ſeveral individuals, who carried on a correſpondence with the Ruſſian Empreſs, were alarmed for her reputation. You

* The firſt Letter to the Counteſs d'Egmont ſerves as a preface to this hiſtory. See page vii.

You well know the meaſures which they purſued; and, when they perceived that all the offers which they made me, and which became every day more conſiderable, were of no avail, one of them imagined that by making uſe of your authority, he ſhould obtain his end; I can ſay, in full confidence, with the friend of Gracchus, "If ſhe had ſpoken the word, I had obeyed." What is the reſult of all their attempts? The aſſurance which you poſſeſs of having in your own hands the depoſition of a witneſs who is incorruptible.

For you alone, Madam, this work was compoſed; none of thoſe weighty motives which can engage a man of intrepidity to publiſh anecdotes generally unknown, actuated me to aſſume the pen; and ſtill leſs, an indiſcreet zeal for truth, no partiality, no intrigue of any kind. I could have, without the imputation of weakneſs, and without remorſe, ſacrificed it to my perſonal ſecurity, had I conceived that ſecurity endangered; but I felt an invincible reluctance

luctance to ſacrifice it to any other intereſt whatever. With horror I have beheld the laurels withering on the brow of a writer of the fifteenth century, who made the Princeſs of his day purchaſe his ſilence. Seduction is not eaſily diſcouraged; ſhe imagined that the vanity of an author was a ſtronger paſſion in my breaſt than that of intereſt; that it was neceſſary to tempt me by theſe two paſſions united. It inſinuated the poſſibility of publiſhing my manuſcript with the alteration of a few facts, or even of permitting them to be altered without my making any complaint. Indignation dictated my reply, and I broke off all connexion with emiſſaries who could make ſuch a propoſition. You, Madam, and the Count d'Egmont, are well acquainted with all theſe circumſtances. What have thoſe perſons, who endeavour to perſuade the world that the whole of this narrative is a fiction, to oppoſe to this? Would a man, capable of inventing, or falſifying at will, the anecdotes related in this hiſtory,

conduct

conduct himself as I have done? And has my conduct no other principle, but the partiality of a writer of romances, for the creatures of his own imagination?

The reading of this work soon dissipated the uneasiness which the first report of its existence had occasioned. The extreme impartiality which pervades the narration, proved a singular advantage to me. The partisans of the Russian Empress, and those who do not regard this Princess in so very favourable a point of view, have equally discovered in the recital, fresh motives to confirm them in the opinions which they had adopted, and I have had as advocates with the Empress herself, some of her most decided partisans.

But let us examine the criticisms on which my accusation is founded. The following is one which has been most frequently repeated; the proverbial expression, "What had we to do in this galley?" qu'avions-nous à faire dans cette maudite galère? is, they allege, a pleasantry purely French, and could never have been found in common

mon uſe among the Ruſſian ladies. By this ſagacious obſervation, the authors of it have only diſplayed their ignorance both of Ruſſia and of the manners of the people of that country; ſince it is evident, they know not that our dramatic pieces are every day repreſented on the theatres of Peterſburgh, and even in the French language.

I related this ſtroke of humour, becauſe it ſerves to depict characters and manners; but there is another in which I have indulged myſelf reſpecting the ſuſpected connexions of Count Poniatouſki; and I frankly own, that on the firſt glance this appears to ſavour much more of the hiſtorian than of the hiſtory; it may be alleged, that in this inſtance I have choſen Petronius for a model, rather than Tacitus; you yourſelf have declared againſt this ſtroke of playſomeneſs. I however will preſume to juſtify it, in oppoſition even to you, on introducing that young Poloneſe on the ſtage. In order to ſhed a degree of luſtre on the recital of a love affair, and

to

to keep up the attention of the reader, it was neceſſary to announce that a crown was to become the price of this adventure. But the high elevation which Count Poniatouſki actually attained, would have inſpired the loftieſt idea of him; it would have raiſed an expectation for the ſequel of the narrative, of an intereſt which ſhould have had him for its object. One of the greateſt advantages of the familiar ſtyle which I have adopted, was that of employing, on this occaſion, playſomeneſs and pleaſantry, in order to leave that perſonage in his natural mediocrity, at the ſame time that I was announcing all the importance of this narration.

I might diſcuſs the motives which have induced a few individuals to exert themſelves to render this hiſtory ſuſpected; I could make it appear, that the moſt dangerous of my critics, I ſay the moſt dangerous, becauſe he was the moſt powerful, knew nothing of Ruſſia, nor of the Ruſſians, nor even of my performance itſelf.

Above

Above all, I might, in imitation of every ancient hiſtorian, maintain, that a perſon worthy of credit, and who does not heſitate to publiſh his name to the world, has an inconteſtable right to be conſidered as an authority, when he relates events of which he was an eye-witneſs, and the particulars of which he collected on the very ſpot where they took place. But if more authorities are ſtill called for, the number would only embarraſs me.

In fact, among the frequent readings of this narrative which I have been obliged to give, all thoſe which were attended by perſons intimately acquainted with the events, ſo far from diſcovering the ſlighteſt diſpoſition to contradict me, have furniſhed me with freſh authorities.

I need not remind you, Madam, of my having read it in your preſence to the Duke de Choiſeul, a man who had the moſt accurate information of every event which paſſed in Europe during the period of his adminiſtration, and to the Baron de Breteuil,

Breteuil, who is more than once perſonally indicated in the work, and to whom the Piedmonteſe Odart made the ſingular declaration which I have related; in a word, who is thoroughly acquainted with every perſon and every fact mentioned in my performance.

To call in the teſtimony of the King of Sweden on the ſubject of a revolution, would be to quote the authority of a maſter; he is much more verſant in matters of this kind, than all my critics put together. But what is more eſſential to the proofs which I wiſh to diſcuſs, the deceaſed King, his father, had been the preceptor of Peter III. and afterwards was indebted to him for his crown; the Court of Sweden was the only one which had generoſity enough to go into mourning on the death of that unfortunate Emperor. A union, cemented by motives of gratitude, and of political intereſt, had rendered him peculiarly attentive to that event. This Prince, who, during his reſidence at Paris, connected him-

ſelf with you, Madam, in a friendſhip which does equal honour to you both, told me in the preſence of the Count de Breutz, who is at this day his ambaſſador at the Court of France, and of the Count de Lewenhaup, field-marſhal in the French ſervice, that the relation tranſmitted to the Swediſh ſenate, was ſtrictly conformable to my narrative. He informed me, that the King, his father, had choſen as the moſt proper perſons to ſuperintend the education of Peter III. the two virtuous individuals of whom I have made mention. In addition to this, he ſaid, that while his education was going forward, there was not the ſlighteſt probability, that Peter was ever to be called to the throne of the Ruſſian empire; that the Houſe of Holſtein expected to ſee him aſcend the throne of Sweden, and that with the deſign of obtaining the ſuffrages of the Swediſh nation in his behalf, with the greater facility, his education had received a republican caſt. Thus he has confirmed, in a manner which cannot

not be controverted, every circumſtance which I have related, reſpecting the education of the Czar, and the manner in which I have attempted to explain a character ſo unaccountable.

In the whole compaſs of hiſtory, we are preſented with only one character which bears any ſimilarity to his. It is that of Antiochus Epiphanis, who, on ſome occaſions, appearing to loſe ſight of the abſolute authority which he poſſeſſed, went about the ſtreets and public ſquares of Antioch, ſoliciting the ſuffrages of the loweſt orders of the people, to be elevated to ſome petty magiſtracy, and who afterwards cauſed a curule chair to be brought into the public market places, from whence he adjuſted the differences of the meaneſt of the populace. According to hiſtorians, he blended the moſt ſumptuous magnificence, with the loweſt arts of popularity; of undaunted bravery, poſſeſſing talents for war, and a knowledge of the arts, he continually proſtituted his talents, his knowledge, his

rank, and his dignity ſometimes in ſhops, in forges, in work-houſes; ſometimes mingling in the moſt contemptible amuſements, in which he delighted to make a ſpectacle of himſelf, in the midſt of pomp, the moſt extravagant. He aſſumed by turns, the manners and the perſonage of all conditions, and of all characters, ſo that neither he himſelf, nor any other perſon really knew what manner of man he was.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that this ſingular character may be explained preciſely in the ſame manner, in which I have unfolded that of Peter III. This Aſiatic deſpot was of Greek extraction. In his youth, he had ſpent ſome time at Athens, and ſtill a longer period at Rome, where he was detained as a hoſtage. Is it not extremely probable, that during the time he paſſed in theſe two Republics, he had acquired that habit of equality, that ambition of diſtinguiſhing himſelf by a perſonal merit? Impreſſions received in his youth, kept up on a weak mind, but of lively and

eaſy

eaſy conception, had produced that ridiculous compound of reaſon, of talents, and of abſurdity.

Both Antiochus Epiphanis, and the Czar, Peter III. had received an education far too enlarged for their genius; this is not the calamity to which princes are commonly expoſed in their infancy. It appears to me to be an undoubted fact, that the contradiction apparent in every character, might be thus explained, provided you could diſcover among the generality of mankind, the circumſtances which produced the livelieſt impreſſions on their minds in their younger years.

But I return to the new teſtimonies, which I can eaſily adduce in ſupport of the truth of my relation. The Count de Vielhorſki, whom we ſee at the preſent moment, diſcharging in France with ſo much zeal and ſagacity, the difficult office of Envoy from the Poliſh Confederacy, was preſent when this narrative was read to his Royal Highneſs, Prince Charles of

Saxony, Duke of Courland. This Prince has a perſonal intereſt in being accurately informed reſpecting the intrigues of the Court of Ruſſia. His crown depended upon it, as the event has demonſtrated. He was in perſon at Peterſhoff, on the very night that Peter III. ſurpriſed Poniatouſki, on the point of entering the apartment of the Grand Dutcheſs. On the ſame day, he dined with the huſband and wife after their reconciliation; and he has in the moſt poſitive manner atteſted the truth of this anecdote, and of every other which has been related in the former part of this hiſtory.

I have found, nevertheleſs, with reſpect to this anecdote, and I acknowledge it with the utmoſt frankneſs, a conſiderable variation in another recital. I have it from a gentleman who pretends to have acted an important part in that ſcene. The perſon I mean, is Count Brancki, the friend, the confidant, the defender of the King of Poland. According to his account, the

Grand

Grand Duke's reſentment was not eaſily appeaſed. After having releaſed Poniatouſki, the Grand Duke not only perſiſted in his determination to have him diſmiſſed from that Court with infamy, but reſolved on diſſolving his marriage with the Grand Dutcheſs, and on having her ſhut up in a convent. He had her conveyed to a ſmall houſe near Oranienbaum, and kept cloſe priſoner. The ſentinels placed around it, had orders to ſuffer no one to approach it, except a certain number of courtiers, entirely devoted to the Grand Duke. This Prince, jealous and irritated, was in that houſe, and breathed nothing but vengeance.

Count Brancki, as he himſelf relates, undertook to ſave the Grand Dutcheſs. A perpetual rivalſhip, in the career of ſocial competition, had openly embroiled him in Poland with Count Poniatouſki. They behaved to each other at Peterſburgh, with extreme coldneſs. Brancki had come to that court, in the ſuite of Prince Charles;

and this was a new ground of alienation between thoſe two Poliſh young men, as Prince Charles was doing his utmoſt to procure the recal of Count Poniatouſki, whoſe intrigues gave uneaſineſs to the houſe of Saxony. Brancki, however, did not feel himſelf bound to ſecond the uneaſineſs of that houſe, in oppoſition to the fortune of a young gentleman, his fellow citizen and his equal; but habituated from childhood, to be the rival of Poniatouſki, he endeavoured to render himſelf more agreeable to the Grand Dutcheſs than the other was. He was in hopes of finding opportunities to this purpoſe, by aſſiduouſly paying court to the Grand Duke. He entertained that prince on his favourite ſubjects, ſieges, battles, military plans. A ſingle campaign, which his youth had permitted him to ſerve, qualified him to reaſon upon it with ſufficient intelligence, for the capacity of the Grand Duke, who frequently carried him to his little fortreſs, drilled the men in his preſence,

ſence, and conſulted him reſpecting all his military projects. Brancki, on being informed of what had paſſed at Peterſhoff, and of the dangers to which the Grand Dutcheſs was expoſed, went in queſt of Poniatouſki. On his eſcape from this unfortunate rencounter, he had returned to Peterſburgh; he there waited, in the utmoſt conſternation, the diſpoſal of his deſtiny, without taking any ſtep whatever. Brancki adviſed him to begin with writing to the Grand Duke's miſtreſs; and this letter being written, the effect of which was intended to be a favourable impreſſion on the mind of the Grand Duke himſelf, he propoſed to conduct him to the preſence of that prince, at the pavilion in which the Grand Dutcheſs was guarded. It was a bold undertaking, and the temerity of Brancki prevailed over the timid circumſpection of his fortunate rival. The two young Poloneſe, then, purſued together circuitous paths. On coming near the pavilion, Poniatouſki remained concealed in

the thickeſt of the wood. Brancki advanced alone, reſolved, let the conſequence be what it might, to preſent himſelf ſuddenly to the eyes of the Grand Duke, without being announced, and determined to kill, were it neceſſary, any ſentinel who ſhould endeavour to oppoſe his paſſage. He was more fortunate, and appeared unexpectedly, as he wiſhed, in the Grand Duke's preſence. This prince, in aſtoniſhment, aſked how he had got thither. By a ſtratagem of war, replied Brancki; and immediately fell a relating to him the pretended artifices which he had employed to elude the ſentinels. His diſcourſe and his audacity charmed the Grand Duke; and Brancki, after having completely inſinuated himſelf into his good graces, by ſuch kind of converſation, ſeized the favourable moment of repreſenting to him, how unjuſt it would be to ruin the Grand Dutcheſs, for the folly of a young man, who, perhaps, was in love with her, without any return of affection on her part:

part: in a word, he wound him up to ſuch a pitch as to make him ſend for Poniatouſki, and engaged him to conduct the culprit to the apartment of the Grand Dutcheſs, to entreat her forgiveneſs of his fooliſh attempt of the preceding night.

Brancki adds, that he himſelf had, not long after, an interview with the Grand Dutcheſs. He told her: "that it was not Count Poniatouſki whom he meant to ſerve, but herſelf alone, and from a ſentiment very oppoſite to any deſign of ſerving Poniatouſki." He addreſſed her, on that occaſion, in a high ſtrain of gallantry and paſſion, which were neither accepted nor rejected; and he conſiders that adventure, as the ſource of the high fortune to which he has attained, amidſt the calamities of his country, and which leaves him, henceforth, nothing ſhort of a throne to aſpire after.

This detail, which I have immediately from Count Brancki, on the ſuppoſition of its being moſt conformable to truth, if examined

amined with attention, does not contradict that which I have given, on the authority of eye-witneſſes, of the confidants of the Empreſs, of the account given by the favourite who, at that time, governed the empire. Peter was not a man to perſevere long in the ſame reſolution. It is extremely poſſible, that, after having promiſed to repair the exploſion which his jealouſy and his anger had, in the firſt tranſports, given to this adventure, he ſhould ſtill have felt returning fits of indignation, and deſires of vengeance; and where is the ſtoic, who, in ſuch a rencounter, could have been proof againſt thoſe alternatives? The acknowledgement which the Grand Dutcheſs made to her huſband, in my relation, is aſſuredly conſiſtent with the character of that Princeſs. The turn which Brancki aſſumes, in ſpeaking to that Prince, is not ſo, and ought not to be ſo. I could cheerfully appeal, on this particular, to all thoſe whom the chances of ſocial life may have thrown into ſimilar conjunctures.

I know

I know not what ſtreſs the reader may be diſpoſed to lay on the teſtimony of the Piedmonteſe Odart. I will not even conceal, that this Piedmonteſe, having returned to his native country, according to his declared intention, was, not long ago, ſtruck dead by lightning. But before his death, the Chevalier d'Aris, of the Academy of Sciences, and M. de Trudaine, had met him in the city of Nice, which he had choſen for the place of his retreat; and if we muſt ſpeak of him, conformably to his own opinions, his conduct was then as honourable as his fortune. Both of theſe gentlemen had a diſtinct recollection of this hiſtory, and Odart's account of the matter, completely confirmed to them the truth of the whole.

Some perſons, it is true, who were acquainted with the Princeſs d'Aſchekof, when on her travels, did not diſtinguiſh in her, the young Princeſs who had intereſted them, in hearing my narrative. I entreat them to obſerve, that ſhe is there painted

at

at the age of eighteen, and that I myſelf have announced, before I conclude, the change which her diſgrace produced upon her. She feels already, if I may uſe the expreſſion, that melancholy undeception, which is the ordinary fruit of a tardy experience. She has loſt, at an age ſo tender, all the illuſions of fortune, of friendſhip, and of glory. Humiliation has blighted that ardent and generous character, which prompted her to ſacrifice her family, which inſpired her with enthuſiaſm and credulity, which, in her firſt emotions of diſſatisfaction with the Empreſs, drew from her this open declaration: "I thought I was acting right, but I deceived myſelf." The long diſgrace which ſhe has undergone, and the frightful ſentiment of the ſlavery to which ſhe is ſubjected, have ſoured her temper, without her daring henceforth to wear the appearance of diſcontent. This is her picture at the moment I am writing. She ſtill retains the ſame ardor of ſpirit which carried her to the barracks, which made

made her assume a man's dress, and march at the head of an army. I have no where spoken of her beauty; her age, and she then possessed all the lustre of it, supplied the place of beauty, at the time I have painted her.

I could add a multitude of other facts to a letter, already too long; but it will be impossible for any thing to convince those who are not convinced by what has been said; and I believe I have sufficiently justified, in your eyes, a work entirely conceived under your auspices.

I am,

With the most profound respect,

Madam,

Your most humble

and most obedient Servant,

RULHIERE.

Paris, Aug. 25, 1773.

B O O K S

PRINTED FOR, AND SOLD BY

JOSEPH NANCREDE,

No. 49, Marlbro' Street, Boſton.

A good ſtanding Family Book.

JUST PUBLISHED,

On a fine woven Paper, with elegant Engravings,

Dedicated to the PRESIDENT of the *U. States,*

The *Studies* of *Nature.*

Tranſlated from the French of

James Henry Bernardin de Saint Pierre,

BY HENRY HUNTER, D. D.

THIS very *ingenious*, intereſting and inſtructive work has, ſince its firſt publication, gone through four ſucceſſive impreſſions, under the author's immediate inſpection; beſides a variety of pirated editions in different parts of the European continent.

No book diſplays a more ſublime theology, inculcates a purer morality, or breathes a more ardent and expanſive philanthropy. St. Pierre enables us to contemplate this univerſe with other eyes; has furniſhed new arguments to combat Atheiſm; has eſtabliſhed, beyond the power of contradiction, the doctrine of a univerſal providence; has excited a warmer intereſt in favor

favor of ſuffering humanity, and has diſcovered ſources, unknown before, of moral and intellectual enjoyment.

The avidity with which the clergy and other learned characters in New-England, have purchaſed the Engliſh edition of this delightful performance, and the opinion entertained by them, and warranted by experience, that, although written before the "Age of Reaſon," a part of it contains a more ſolid and complete refutation of it than any thing publiſhed ſince, are perhaps a ſufficient recommendation of the STUDIES OF NATURE, in which the Botaniſt, the natural and Chriſtian Philoſopher, the friend of order and government are equally intereſted, and by which they will be equally gratified.

As no pains nor expenſe have been ſpared in procuring ſuitable paper and able artiſts, to render the work worthy of the public, and, as the Subſcribers have expreſſed their approbation of it, the publiſher flatters himſelf, that gentlemen, who, on account of the bad paper and print of *ſome* American editions, give generally the preference to the Engliſh, will honor this with a compariſon, before they purchaſe.

To thoſe gentlemen, who, though already poſſeſſed of one ſet of the work, have become ſubſcribers to this edition, with a view to encourage the propagation of an inſtructive and moral book, and aſſiſt the editor, in the expenſe of ſo large a publication, he offers the higheſt, and, he is conſcious, the moſt agreeable tribute of gratitude, the engagement of ever ſeeking his intereſt in the publication of books, calculated to promote *virtue*, *morality*, and *public utility*.

A Vindication of Divine Providence, *derived from a philoſophical and moral ſurvey of nature and of man.* By the author of *Studies of Nature.* 2 vols. 8vo. with plates.

The ſame Work abridged, in 1 vol. 8vo. plates.

JOSEPH NANCREDE

INFORMS the Public, and in particular, *Gentlemen of taſte, of ſcience; the lovers of the arts and belles-letters*, That he has juſt received by the Minerva, Capt. Turner, from London, a Collection of Books, conſiſting of ſeveral thouſand volumes, which, he flatters himſelf, will be found as extenſive and well choſen, as any ever imported into the United States. —In THEOLOGY, LAW, POLITICS and HISTORY, he has been particularly attentive in ſelecting all that is rare and valuable, in the Engliſh language. —All new works and ſcarce tracts, many of which were never ſeen before in America, are compriſed in this aſſortment: he therefore, with confidence, invites his literary friends to his Store, No. 49, Marlbro' Street, perſuaded that he can accommodate their wiſhes and ſatisfy their wants, with the beſt editions of the beſt works, upon the moſt reaſonable terms.

I NO 61 9